

Body and mind in Theravāda and Yogācāra Buddhism

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“No, I don’t notice any pain...”

(Mrs. Klazien Berghuis-Veenema (born in 1918 and my grandmother), while lying in the hospital with her belly cut open after having a tumour and part of her intestines removed.)

“Mind and body have their hands so deep in each other’s pockets it’s hard to tell whose car keys are whose.”

(Barasch 1993: 58)

Introduction

As human beings we inevitably stumble upon questions regarding the relation between the mental and the physical since we are able to experience both of them. We are confronted with seemingly irreconcilable differences between mind and matter. They seem to belong to different worlds, yet we experience what seem to be mutual influences between the two. As I grow older, my awareness of these influences has grown, and this has sparked my interest in the nature and interrelatedness of the body and mind that I call mine. I get tense in the presence of certain people, nauseous when I see images of war and grumpy when hungry or tired.

Both body and mind give us ample opportunity to cling to life and Buddhists therefore have sought to find out in what ways mind and matter actually keep us in *samsāra*. The question on the nature of body and mind and of the relation between them is of great importance to Buddhism. This essay will explore, compare and assess views of the only currently surviving form of mainstream Buddhism (Theravāda) and an early representative of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Yogācāra) on the relation

* This paper originated as assignment during my MA in Buddhist Studies (University of Sunderland, UK). I supplement it with some gratefully received and very to the point remarks made by my professor, Peter Harvey.

between mind and body. Although some good introductions and general overviews of Buddhist attitudes towards the body exist (e.g. Wilson 2004, Collins 1997, Williams 1997), comparisons between mainstream and Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions have rarely been made.

Dr. Walpola Rahula has evaluated Buddhist philosophy as being a development of new interpretations, theories, explanations and arguments of an old philosophy (Rahula 1978: 79, as cited in Kochumuttom 1982: 233). This has been one position in a debate on continuity and change amongst Buddhologists. In choosing to compare the views of these two traditions I hope to make clear that the Yogācārin built upon ideas elaborated by various early schools, mainly Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika. I chose to connect, instead of to polarize. One of the flaws of this essay, however, must be admitted immediately: Although I will comment on philosophical continuity and change by comparing views held by Theravādins and Yogācārin, I have hardly described philosophical change *within* these schools. Time and space have forced me to treat their representative ideas as remaining fairly the same throughout more than two millennia.

“What’s Buddha gotta do with it?” Body, mind and liberation

The Buddha died some 2500 years ago. Around a century later, confusion arose amongst people who were following his teachings. This first schism resulted in several schools or traditions. The perspective of one party of this schism was preserved by the Theravāda, which developed in Sri Lanka. It still exists as a rather conservative Buddhist school of thought that, doctrinally, has seen little change over the 2500 years or so of its existence. This doctrine is said to be based on the discourses (*suttas*) originally given by the Buddha and their explanation in the Pali commentaries, as well as their systematisation in the Pali Abhidhamma and its commentaries.

Yogācāra stands for ‘the practice of Yoga’, various ways of physical and mental development that lead to the main ideas of the school. Two men stand out as founding fathers, namely Asaṅga (fourth or fifth century) and Vasubandhu. Yogācāra offered both a new interpretation of older (philosophical) ideas and inspiration to later traditions of Northern

(Tibetan) and Eastern (mainly Chinese and Japanese) Buddhism. The doctrinal texts of the Yogācāra-school differ in focus, which makes it quite difficult to ascertain what the overall perspective of the Yogācāra-school is (Keenan 1982: 7. See Ueda 1967 and Griffiths 1986 chapter 3.1 for a discussion of several currents of Yogācāra-thought).

Buddhism in general aims at a structural relief of unhappiness. This, it holds, can only come about by ending the sheer endless cycle of rebirth, *saṃsāra*. To understand the way this cycle is conditioned by our actions (*karma*) and to know the way that certain conditions contribute to certain results is of crucial importance. For Buddhists, then, it is a pertinent question to wonder what causes are mental and which are physical, and how they affect each other. Before looking more closely to the ways Theravādins and Yogācārins interpreted body and mind, and to be able to assess their views afterwards, let us see what ways there can be to approach this question.

The philosopher Descartes (1596-1650) has been held responsible for the rift between body and mind that has characterized most of Western philosophy and science during the last three centuries. Many different positions in the body-and-mind-debate have been explored by philosophers. Generally, we can distinguish monistic and dualistic views.

Monistic views deny the existence of a real distinction between body and mind. Some variations are:

1. *Materialism, reductionism* or *physicalism*: The mental can be reduced to the physical.
2. *Idealism* or *psychomonism*: The physical can be reduced to the mental.
3. *Identity-theory*: Body and mind are manifestations of one and the same reality.

Dualistic views hold that body and mind form two heterogeneous and irreducible principles. Some variations are:

1. *Hierarchical view*: Body and mind are of a different order. Mind either rules matter, or is a by-product (epi-phenomenon) of brain activity (epiphenomenalism)¹.
2. *Dualistic interactionism*: Body and mind are of a different order, but influence each other.
3. *Psychophysical parallelism*: Body and mind are different substances and do not interact. Semblance of mutual influence occurs through far-stretching synchronicity.

The Buddha, in explaining the way things really are, frequently referred to Conditioned Arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*): *Saṃsāra* is perpetuated because certain conditions bring about certain results. Famous is the 12-fold link of Conditioned Arising, wherein the body is linked to the mind:

Spiritual ignorance → constructing activities → (discriminative) consciousness → mind-and-body → the six sense-bases → sensory stimulation → feeling → craving → grasping → existence → birth → 'ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and distress. (*Mahāpadāna Sutta*, DN. II. 32-33; see also Harvey 1990: 55 and Harvey 1995: 119.)

It seems to indicate that the better we know the ways the body and mind interact, the better we understand the prolonging of *saṃsāra*. Before gaining insight into these intricate workings of Conditioned Arising however, Gotama indulged in pleasing the senses and later almost starved himself to death to reach liberation. Eventually, both proved to distract the mind so much, that he chose a middle way to bridge the seemingly different qualities of mind and body.

Mind-and-body is the 4th link or condition (*nidāna*) in the chain of Conditioned Arising, following consciousness and conditioning the six

¹ A fairly new discipline is so-called 'neuroscience', an interdisciplinary field of study where people like neurologists, neuro-psychologists, neuro-biologists and neuro-philosophers study connections between neural activity and cognition (i.e. behaviour, perception, emotion, attention etc.). One interesting result of this kind of research has been that for some cognitive functions (e.g. sight or the use of language) parts of the brains can be pointed out as essential. A very precise incision can eliminate perception of horizontal lines or understanding of words

sense-bases. ‘Mind-and-body’ is actually a rough translation of *nāma-rūpa*, a very common denomination that is often encountered in the *suttas*. Literally it means ‘name-and-form’. *Rūpa* is composed of the four Great Elements (*dhātu*) and their derivatives: ‘earth’ (the quality of solidity), ‘water’ (the quality of cohesion), ‘fire’ (the quality of heat) and ‘air’ (the quality of motion) (Conze 1992: 58, note 1). For early Buddhism *rūpa* does not equate the physical side of an organism, since *rūpa* also encompasses some mental elements. There is no dualism of *nāma* as a mental ‘substance’ versus *rūpa* as a physical ‘substance’ in early Buddhism (Harvey 1993: 39), like for instance there was for Descartes. In the *suttas*, *nāma* is used to refer to all aspects of mind except consciousness itself. In later texts, it usually also includes consciousness (Harvey 1993: 32). The three most important terms for mind or consciousness are *citta*, *mano* and *viññāṇa*. These terms are used as synonyms, but also with different meanings. This makes it quite hard to pin down a Buddhist image of the concept of ‘mind’ (Sugunasiri 1995: 415). The meaning of *citta* is best understood as referring to the emotional side of a person. *Mano* and *viññāṇa* refer more to the rational side of a person’s mind (PTS Pali-English Dictionary, entry for *citta*).

In understanding the way a person ‘works’, the *suttas* not only use *nāma-rūpa*, but also refer to five groups, ‘aggregates’ or *khandhas* (Sanskrit *skandhas*), which form types of processes that make up a human: form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), cognition (*saññā*), constructing activities (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The first of these refers to the physical events of an individual; the others have to do with mental events. According to Theravādins and other early Buddhists, what makes up a ‘person’ is not only the collection of personality-factors, but also a ‘functional relationship’ (Harvey 1995: 36), just as when the different parts of a chariot, assembled properly, are being labelled ‘chariot’ (*Saṃyutta Nikaya* V. 10). However, while the parts of a chariot can exist separately from each other, the *khandhas* can only occur together (except in the formless spheres, where there is no *rūpa*, or the unconscious realm, where the other *khandhas* do not occur).

A third description of the events that make up a person is that between the body and consciousness. In this case, *kāya* is the word used to describe the sentient body as a collection of mental and physical processes; as it encompasses form, feeling, cognition and the constructing activities

(so the first four of the *khandhas*), it can include mental processes. *Kāya*, according to the Pali Text Society's *Pali-English Dictionary*, is quite similar to *rūpa* when referring to appearance and looks. This 'sentient body' (*kāya* or *nāma-rūpa*) is governed by discernment as a lord governs over his town, say the early suttas (e.g. S.IV.194-195 in Harvey 1995: 118). One could say that without the direction and vision of a lord, a town dissolves into chaos. Without the sustenance and support of a town, a lord becomes a powerless fantasist.

The blind and the cripple: Meditation as mediation

Another simile to describe the mutual dependency of body and mind, is that of the blind (*rūpa*) carrying the cripple (*nāma*). It can be found in the *Visuddhimagga* p.596, a systematisation and clarification of the Theravāda doctrine and practice by the fifth century CE commentator Buddhaghosa. The simile leaves one with the feeling that both body and mind are, in a way, deficient manifestations of what we perceive as reality. Looking in the mirror and seeing a familiar face, we tend to identify the body with who we are, with ourselves. At the same time the body represents impermanence (as it normally lasts less than 100 years) and *dukkha* (as we feel hungry or sleepy and experience pain through it) more than our mind does. At one time, the Buddha described the attitude to the body thus:

This body, monks, is not yours, nor another's: it is to be seen as old *karma* which is constructed, thought out, felt. Therefore, monks, a learned disciple of the Holy ones attends well, methodically, to Conditioned Arising ...' (*Samyutta Nikaya* II 64-65 in Harvey 1995: 48).

So the body is karma of the past, curdled, coagulated if you will, into physical form. The Buddha also pointed out that the body was actually more suitable as a candidate for a Self than the mind. The mind is changing constantly, whereas the body, though prey to decay, has some air of stability (*Samyutta Nikaya* II: 94-95, cited by Williams 2000: 63). At another time, the Buddha is quoted as having said:

It is in this fathom-length carcase, friend, with its perception and mind-organ (*mano*) that, I declare, lies the world, and the origination of the world, and the stopping of the world, and the course that leads to the stopping of the world (S.I.62).

Buddhists have always taken these admonitions to heart by devoting much time to meditation. For Theravādins to view clearly materiality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*) and to be able to distinguish between them is an aspect of ‘purification of view’ (Remark of Peter Harvey, BUDM04, session 16, par. 4.2). In the *Visuddhimagga* this process is compared to that of having seen a snake in your house and following to see where it hides out (*Visuddhimagga*, p. 587). Analysing the presence of the four material elements (*dhātu*) can help overcome the illusion of a permanent Self, for instance, and meditating on corpses or the bodily fluids can help overcome feelings of lust that are felt bodily, but are actually a mental response. Eventually, the object is an end to clinging:

Cultivating distaste for the body by noting with disgust the discharges from various apertures of the body constitutes an initial stage of psychophysical training practiced by monastics of virtually all Buddhist denominations. (...) Ultimately the outlook meditators seeks neither attraction nor revulsion but indifference. (Wilson 2004: 64)

Meditation-exercises often use the body as a tool that is readily available to the practitioner, and that is most often closely related to an awareness of personality (my body is what constitutes me) and individuality (my body is what makes me different from others). Through (observation of) the body one has a powerful instrument to analyse Conditioned Arising. Paul Griffiths has devoted an entire study (Griffiths 1986) to the philosophical implications of one very specific meditative state, the attainment of cessation. One of the effect meditation can have, is that consciousness can become less dependent on the physical body (Harvey 1993: 31). Meditation can also alter the usual patterns of interaction between mind and body, which accordingly affects the type of process-events (and their consequences) that arise. Through meditation, one can reach levels of experience where only mental phenomena exist (Harvey 1993: 36-38). Body-and-mind is then referred to as *mano-maya-kāya*, the so-called mind-made body, which can be experienced as a temporary

construct produced that is still seen to be able to sense the physical realm of form.

There was one meditative experience that had the Yogācārins puzzled: in the meditative state of ‘attainment of cessation’, all mental processes were absent, even the intention that normally conditioned sense-consciousness. How could a meditator mentally rise from this state, without there being any mental (intentional) events (Griffiths 1986: 103)? The Yogācārins found an answer in a concept called *ālaya-vijñāna*, the ‘store-consciousness’. The *ālaya-vijñāna* can be seen as a receptacle of (mental) consequences (or ‘seeds’) of one’s thoughts and deeds. Although it has no object and produces no experience directly, it is the basis from which intentional sense-consciousnesses (re)emerges (Griffiths 1986: 106).

Although the *ālaya-vijñāna* was later on experienced as being a newly invented category of consciousness, there was always a tendency to point to early Buddhist sources to stress the fact that it wasn’t something really new. Thus Tsong-kha-pa, in his commentary of the Yogācāra tradition, quotes Asaṅga’s *Mahasamgrya* where it points to proof of the *ālaya-vijñāna* in ‘*Hināya* sacred texts’ (Tsongkhapa 1995: 134-135). Already in the Theravādin post-canonical *Milindapaṇha* (*Miln.* 50 – 1, as quoted by Harvey 1995: 65), continuity in mental and physical processes was illustrated by the simile of a seed that eventually, under certain circumstances, grows and yields fruit. It was this simile that was further developed by the Yogācārins. The existence of a direct relationship with *bhavaṅga*, the latent ground state of consciousness that had been explained by the Theravādins, remains unclear. Besides early Buddhist sources, logic was also placed in position to defend the *ālaya-vijñāna*. According to one chief text of Yogācāra, Asaṅga’s *Abhidharmasamuccayabhāṣya*, if there were no *ālaya-vijñāna*, taking a body would be impossible (Tsongkhapa 1995: 125). Simply any form of consciousness (the early *suttas* posed 6, corresponding with the six senses) would not do, because these only arise based upon the corresponding organ, an external object and intention (*manasikāra*). As there are no organs (physical or mental, like *mano* and its objects) before conception, there could be no consciousness according to this approach.

From dualism to pluralism to idealism

Among Buddhist scholars, opinions differ on whether the Theravādins had a dualistic or pluralistic view of mental and physical processes. According to Thomas Kochumuttom (1982: 1-3) the early Buddhist thinkers recognized a plurality of beings which really exist and operate relatively independently of each other. He labelled this view, which refers to pluralism as pertaining to the ontological universe, as 'realistic pluralism'. There is not necessarily a direct contradiction with the viewpoint of the Yogācārins here. Dualism of the kind that the Yogācāra denies (the separation of subject and object) refers to the epistemological or experiential universe of discourse. It stands for duality of understanding. Denying this type of duality therefore does not contradict accepting plurality of beings.

Paul Griffiths holds that the Theravādins indeed did conceive of the world as consisting of a duality of physical and mental processes. According to Griffiths, it basically was this dualism that prevented the Theravādins from philosophically coherently linking physical processes (like the state of hibernation during the state of cessation) to mental ones (like consciousness returning to the body after this state of cessation) (1986: 37). Peter Harvey (1993: 39) does not agree. He contends that the Theravādins were (and are) not unwilling to accept the fact that physical events can lead up to mental ones. After all, they do mention a physical basis for consciousness. However, accepting this possible connection seems, to me, to pose two problems:

1. That there is a physical basis for consciousness is acknowledged by the Theravādins, but where it can be found in the body, is not (Harvey 1993: 33-34; see also first part of paragraph 5). It is only logically speculated on.
2. Griffiths explores the logical reasons why, prior to a mental rise from the state of cessation, there has to be some process of a mental kind. Harvey (1993: 39) considers it plausible to imagine that this state, being 'not a normal-type' state, calls for a slightly modified logic: a 'prior intention' before going into meditation possibly has conditioned the physical 'basis' which in its turn ensures the end of cessation. I cannot say that I am convinced by this stretching of logical categories.

In contrast to dualistic and pluralistic Theravāda, Yogācāra, with its emphasis on consciousness, could easily be classified as monist. Where the Theravādins considered reality as consisting of *dhammas* that make up ourselves and the things surrounding us, the Yogācārins took this a step further – the objectivity (*grāhyatva*) of things and subjectivity (*grāhakatva*) of oneself that we experience only exists in the mind. The role of the mind in constructing the world is emphasized up to the point that it seems fair to state that the perceived world is ‘thought-only’ (*citta-mātra*) or representation-only (*vijñapti-mātra*). Whereas Western science has considered the body to be on the empiric side of experience, and the mind to be ungraspable, the Yogācārins took it the other way around. For them, the psychic complex which makes up an individual is empiric, while everything else simply cannot be known by ordinary human beings (Kochumuttom 1982: 219). We simply have no direct experience of it. We are here reminded of the Theravāda distinction between ‘ordinary’ right view in the sense of a more ordinary way of thinking and ‘enlightened’ right view, a deeper way of thinking.

It is a characteristic feature of Yogācāra, that besides this world as ordinarily experienced by people, based on the split between subject and object, this experience of mistaken perception and imagined nature (*parikalpita-svabhāva*), it holds that perception of reality can take on two different natures as well: the ‘other-dependent nature’ (*paratantra-svabhāva*) and the ‘absolutely accomplished nature’ (*pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*). This theory of the triple nature of reality is called *tri-svabhāva-vāda*. For the Yogācārins, only the ‘absolutely accomplished nature’ is considered real, the imagined nature being totally unreal. Being able to understand and therefore experience the fact that phenomena in this world are conditioned, is to experience the other-dependent nature. For the Yogācārins the key to salvation from the round of rebirth was to be found in realizing the accomplished nature, in transcending the experience of an object and a subject, of the graspable and a grasper. Without the notion of an object to cling to, or a subject to do the clinging, craving and therefore *dukkha* would end. So if we want to reach buddhahood, we have to be aware of the idiosyncrasy for the graspable-grasper distinction (Conze 1962: 257; Kochumuttom 1982: 12-13).

That the Yogācāra-theory of representation is hard to understand, and in fact can therefore only be properly discussed by enlightened ones, is acknowledged by Vasubandhu himself (*Vims.* 22 in Kochumuttom 1982: 195). One common mistaken interpretation is to think of Yogācāra's maxim as 'all is thought' or 'all is representation'. This topic has seen a lot of discussion among Buddhist and scholars alike. R. King (1998: 11) states on behalf of the Yogācārins that the world of our experience is actually 'there'. Thomas Kochumuttom (1982: 119, 178) however states that according to Vasubandhu, ordinary human conception cannot know the things-in-themselves unless one reaches a state of enlightenment. There really isn't a way to know how we really interact with others, how our body really functions if it exists, how it really is related to the mind. Yogācārins do not actually deny the existence of the physical world, but they deny our possibility to perceive it through any other way than our mind. All we ever have is an experience, a representation of things that appear physical. And this experience also makes us believe that there is a duality between subject and object, between a grasper and things to be grasped (Kochumuttom 1982: 4, 8).

Vasubandhu's refutation of the correspondence theory of knowledge (Kochumuttom 1982: 181-188) has led some to believe that Yogācārins deny absolute reality. The correspondence theory of knowledge holds that knowledge of a certain reality must mean that this reality is extra-mental. Without extra-mental realities, there would be no sense-perception, and therefore no knowledge (Kochumuttom 1982:181). For the Yogācārins, there were two answers to this theory. Firstly, enlightened people are able to know an absolute reality. The fact that ordinary humans cannot know the true nature of things therefore does not mean there is no reality outside of their flow of experiences. The appearance of mental constructions due to our consciousness (or lack thereof!) has nothing to do with the things-in-themselves, which are beyond the range of our experience (Kochumuttom 1982: 10-11). As long as we are unenlightened, we hold that many of our experiences correspond to physical objects in an external world. Yogācāra says that we in fact only experience mental states. Only the enlightened may also know of something that lies beyond these. Secondly, sense-perception is the strongest means of gaining knowledge, according to Vasubandhu, and it

can indeed occur without extra-mental objects. To prove this, he points to the state of dreaming, (*Vims.* 16, Kochumuttom 1982: 182).

This second argument contains what is possibly Vasubandhu's foremost conclusion in his *Viṃśatikā* (Treaty in Twenty Stanzas): in the state of *saṃsāra*, every individual is in a state of transcendental dream. It is Kochumuttom's conviction that whatever the Yogācārins say about reality applies only to this one dream, to each individual stream of existence (1982: 19). Searching the truth in an external world, if it existed, was considered to be less valuable than exploring this transcendental dream by way of concentration (*samādhi*) on the way the mind labels things as subject or object of experience, graspable or grasper (Wayman 1996: 470). To label Yogācārins as idealists would therefore be a mistake. Both Griffiths (1986: 177n19) and Williams (1989: 87 and note 6) disagree with Kochumuttom. Griffiths does not demonstrate exactly why he disagrees, but only states (as elsewhere in his furthermore excellent monograph) that this 'would extend this note into a monograph in its own right.' Williams names Yogācārins 'dynamic idealists', because they consider subjects and object both to be made of the same mental thing, namely experience. Not to name the Yogācārins idealists because their remarks have bearing only to the way we know the world (which is epistemology) is of no value to Williams, who holds that epistemology and ontology are sides of the same coin.

Interaction

For Western science, the idea of mind moving matter has been, until recently, quite unacceptable.² Descartes tried to solve this problem by pointing to a little protruding part of the brain, the pineal gland. This was thought to be the place where the interaction between mind and matter took place. Intentions spurred physiological reactions in the pineal gland, which then made the body move. Buddhist philosophers have also discussed the possibility of consciousness or mind residing somewhere in the physical body. Certain passages in the Pali *suttas* had stated that the mortal body of a person develops because consciousness (*viññāṇa* or *citta*)

² See Basch (1993) for an interesting, humorous report of the recent uneasy acceptance by modern science of further proof of an intricate mutual influence of body and mind.

enters the womb at conception and thereafter remains supported by and bound to the body (Harvey 1993: 30-31). Consciousness, according to the *suttas*, arises when the sense-organ, sense-object and an appropriate act of attention come together. So sense-consciousness is conditioned by both external and internal, both physical and mental factors, including (previous states of) consciousness (Harvey 1993: 33, Kochmutton 1982: 97). And when consciousness separates from the body, death occurs (Griffiths 1986: 136-137).

It is interesting to note, that for Buddhists in general, mental consciousness arises just as much through the use of an organ (namely of thought) as the other 5 forms of consciousness (taste, smell, sight, sound and feeling) do. The *Abhidamma* specifies a physical basis for mind-consciousness, but initially it was not clearly described where this should be in the body. From a diverse use of terms for mind, and from influences of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedas*, the Theravādins seem to have derived the idea of the heart as seat of consciousness (Sugunasiri 1995: 416-417). In the later Theravāda tradition, it was described as 'heart-basis' (*hadaya-vatthu*) and it was actually thought to be part of the physical heart (Harvey 1993: 34, *Visuddhimagga* 447). Several authors have, however, contested that it was a mistake to interpret *hadaya-vatthu* as a part of the physical heart. Rather it should be seen as a reference to the entire nervous system or the whole body (Jayasuriya 1963: Appendix A, as cited by Harvey 1993: 34 and Sugunasiri 1995).

The Theravādins (e.g. the commentator Buddhaghosa in his *Visuddhimagga* 595-597) considered the mental and physical as clusters of mutual supporting, interacting and changing processes. Theravādin *Abhidamma* holds that *citta* can produce or create certain kinds of matter, which are then named '*citta*-originated', but this is always dependent on other forms of matter (Harvey 1993: 36). Basically, mental processes are necessary conditions for other mental processes and, *mutatis mutandis*, physical processes are necessary conditions for other physical processes, but there certainly is mental-physical interaction. This approach has been described by one author as a 'non-substantivist event-based interactionist psycho-physical dualism' (Griffiths 1986: 112). By this he means that for most Buddhists the body and mind are not substances, but collections of processes of mental and physical nature, that interact through events.

This holds true for both Theravādins and Yogācārins, though the Yogācārins contest that there are genuinely physical processes.

The Pali *suttas*, for example at M.I.265, pose that when we properly understand conditioned arising, there is no need to further ponder on a past or future 'I' (Harvey 1995: 65). For the Theravādins the concept of *dhammas* coalescing into more complex conditioned states and being conscious of their constant change was sufficient. They felt no need to digress on what parts of a certain process came from what parts of other processes. Through conditioned arising everything is changing constantly, from one process to another. We should focus on the process which we experience, and not focus on processes that might be or have been:

'Just as when milk comes from a cow, curds from milk, butter from curds, ghee from butter, and the skimming of ghee from ghee. When there is milk, it is not classified as curds, butter, ghee, or skimming of ghee. It is classified just as milk.' (*Dīgha Nikāya* I 210, *sutta* 9).

But just as the process of change from milk to curds to butter can be explained, Buddhists were anxious to know what events conditions the mental and physical change in the personality factors. Sure, curds aren't milk, but milk is a necessary condition for curds, it seems. Then how come milk turns into curds? How (and when) do mental events interact with physical events? How have actions certain effects in a future constellation of mental and physical effects? The Yogācārins, in a way, continued the quest for answers on question that others had posed before and were left unanswered by the approach of early Buddhism. If 'person' is simply a label for mental and physical processes, then what accounts for, or which process experiences, the results of for example karma or rebirth? When the body dissolves, but the mind is also not permanent, what accounts for the effects of action (*karma*)? Not seeing the danger in indulging in the sense-desires with its results, wrongly perceiving pleasure and overcome by defilements, one embarks upon the formation of demerit that occurs in the three doors of karma, like a child who plays with filth. This ignorance then leads to formation (*Visuddhimagga* 531-532). For the Yogācārins the physical processes that we experience are like a sub-category of the mental, since we only experience them through the mind.

Conclusion

Gotama had to balance body and mind, before awakening to the way things really are. In this essay, I have tried to sketch some of the views that Theravādins and Yogācārins developed on body and mind. Buddhism is not only (or mainly) interested in the differences between the mental and the physical as events, as processes, but also (and foremost) in the causal connections that these can have. I have made clear that the Yogācārins followed the reasoning of early Buddhists, but also explored new territories by focussing on the role of consciousness and the mind. Both Theravāda and Yogācāra Buddhism assented to the fact that we tend to perceive these processes as objects. Some of them we call 'persons'. Such a 'person' consists of two types of processes – mental and physical. According to the Theravāda *Abhidamma*, these types of events are interrelated from the moment of conception, although a physical event needs a physical condition and a mental event needs some mental condition to come about. Theravādins and Yogācārins used several terms and categories to describe the mental and the physical. Both Theravādin and Yogācārin approaches make it possible to view the body both as a possible obstruction to awakening (since it can tempt us to view it as a Self or worth to cling to) and as a precious instrument to meditate with and on, thus developing awareness and insight.

The Theravādins are quite comfortable in stating that the mental and physical are collections of *dharmas* that eventually can be seen to be impermanent, not-Self and *dukkha*. The Yogācārins on the other hand felt the need to add that our experience can be part of three different worlds or levels of reality. As long as we remain unenlightened, we either differentiate between self and other, or are able to see that all things are conditioned. Only the awakened people experience reality. Since all we experience is our consciousness and its accompanying mental states, we can call this world 'mind-only'. Scholars don't agree if this meant that for the Yogācārins non-mental things actually are non-existent, or that we simply do not know as long as we remain unenlightened. In the search for an explanation of how body and mind interact (a pertinent question for any dualistic philosophy of body and mind), the Yogācārins worked out a rather new concept: the *ālaya-vijñāna* or store-consciousness. Where the Yogācārins limited experience to the mental, and therefore might be

labelled epistemological non-dualists, they extended the limits of what man is made of by adding to the mental and the physical this kind of (mental) intermediate category of the store-consciousness that provided for continuity in the changing set of mental and physical processes that make up a person.

Philosophy is all about a love for wisdom. Buddhist philosophy is all about finding out the way things really are. For Westerners, who have been raised in a tradition where body and mind are being viewed as two incompatible substances but who are used to identifying with both their mental and physical constituent parts, it is refreshing to explore views of body and mind as *processes* which influence each other. My grandmother, who we met at the beginning of this essay, has just been transferred from the hospital to a nursing-home. When I visit her, I recognize elements of the Theravāda and Yogācāra philosophical approach to the reality of her body and mind. She told us that her intention is to stick around for a little longer. Her condition is an example of the effect of the mental (intention) on the physical (her bodily recovery). In the meantime, whenever one of her relatives proposes future plans, even when they are just half a day ahead, she answers: "We'll see..." It looks like she is even more conscious of an ever changing current of processes and events that is not always at her command.

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