The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra or the *Sutra of the Explanation of the Profound Secrets* is a Buddhist scripture classified as belonging to the Yogācāra or Consciousness-only school of Buddhist thought. This sūtra was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese four times, the most complete and reliable of which is typically considered to be that of Xuanzang.

The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra is variously romanized as "Sandhinirmocana Sutra" and "Samdhinirmocana Sutra".

Like many early Mahāyāna scriptures, precise dating for the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra is difficult to achieve. Étienne Lamotte believed that the text was assembled from earlier, independent fragments. Other scholars believe that the apparently fragmentary nature of the early versions of the scripture may represent piecemeal attempts at translation, rather than a composite origin for the text itself. The earliest forms of the text may date from as early as the 1st or 2nd Century CE. The final form of the text was probably assembled no earlier than the 3rd Century CE, and by the 4th Century significant commentaries on the text began to be composed by Buddhist scholars, most notably Asaṅga. The sūtra was likely composed in Sanskrit in India, but currently exists only in Chinese and Tibetan translations.

The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra is one of the most important texts of the Yogācāra tradition, and one of the earliest texts to expound the philosophy of Consciousness-only. Divided into ten sections, the sūtra presents itself as a series of dialogues between the Buddha and various bodhisattvas. During these dialogues, the Buddha attempts to clarify disputed meanings present in scriptures of the early Mahāyāna and the early Buddhist schools; thus, the title of the sūtra, which promises to expound a teaching that is "completely explicit" and requires no interpretation in order to be understood.

The first four chapters of the sūtra discuss the concept of ultimate truth. The fifth and sixth chapters discuss the concept of ālayavijñāna or "storehouse consciousness" and the three characteristics of phenomena (trilakṣana), which refer to the incomplete and absolute truth of various phenomena. Chapter seven outlines a theory of textual interpretation in light of the Buddha's various teachings, and chapter nine discusses meditation. The chapter nine is devoted to a discussion of the Bodhisattva Path.

Within the sūtra, the Buddha describes the teaching that he is presenting as part of the Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. As such, the Sūtra is intended to clarify confusing or contradictory elements of earlier teachings, presenting a new teaching that resolves earlier inconsistencies. The Sūtra affirms that the earlier turnings of the wheel—the teachings of the Śrāvaka Vehicle (Śrāvakayāna) and the emptiness (Śūnyatā) doctrine adopted by the Mādhyamaka -- represented authentic teachings, but indicates that they were flawed because they required interpretation. The teachings of the Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra, on the other hand, require no interpretation
and can be read literally according to the discourse delivered by the Buddha within the text. This reflects an ancient division in Buddhist hermeneutics, a topic to which the sūtra devotes an entire chapter.

The Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra was adopted by the Yogācāra school as one of its primary scriptures. In addition, it inspired a great deal of additional writing, including discussions by Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Xuanzang, Woncheuk, and a large body of Tibetan literature founded on Je Tsongkhapa’s writings concerning the scripture Ocean of Definitive Meaning: A Teaching for the Mountain Hermit (Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho), written in the first half of the 14th century, is considered the magnum opus of Dölpopa Sherap Gyaltsen (1292–1361).

The Ocean of Definitive Meaning is a hermeneutical text on the issue of the doctrine of the three turnings of the Dharmacakra, which was first codified in the Sutra Unravelling the Thought (Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra).

The Ocean of Definitive Meaning conveys a specific reading, understanding and interpretation of Śūnyatā and Tathāgata-garbha, of the second and third turnings of the wheel respectively. Both Śūnyatā and Tathāgata-garbha are central and key principles of Mahayana Buddhism. This specific reading of Śūnyatā and Tathāgata-garbha and the philosophical view behind it, became known as Zhentong, the key tenet of the Jonangpa.

Dölpopa’s thought in this work is a hermeneutics of the Mahayana Buddhist texts and develops teachings of Maitreya and Yogacara masters Asanga (4th century) and his brother Vasubandhu (4th century).

For 150 years prior to the sacking of the Jonang monasteries by the Gelugpa, the Ocean of Definitive Meaning was banned within the grounds of Gelugpa monasteries.

Jeffrey Hopkins (translator) and Kevin Vose (editor) rendered the Ocean of Definitive Meaning into English as Mountain Doctrine, published by Snow Lion, Ithaca in 2006. A second English rendering of The Ocean of Definitive Meaning entitled Ocean of Definitive Meaning: A Teaching for the Mountain Hermit is numbered volume seven of The Library of Tibetan Classics, a thirty-two volume series covering Tibet’s classical literary heritage, published by Wisdom Publications.

Mindstream in Buddhist philosophy is the moment-to-moment "continuum" (Sanskrit: saṃtāna) of awareness. There are a number of terms in the Buddhist literature that may well be rendered "mindstream".

The mindstream doctrine, like most Buddhist doctrines, is not homogeneous and shows historical development, different applications according to context and varied definitions employed by different Buddhist traditions.

Most Buddhist schools are committed doctrinally to the doctrine of anātman (Pali: anattā), "non-self," the teaching that none of the things perceived by the senses constitute a "self." As Thanissaro Bhikkhu explains, "...the Buddha was asked point-blank whether or not there was a self, he refused to answer. When later asked why, he said that to hold either that there is a self or that there is no self is to fall into extreme forms of wrong view that make the path of Buddhist practice impossible." Scholar Herbert V. Gunther further explains, "an individual, which in other systems is imagined as a combination of matter and a permanent mental principle (ātman), is in reality a continuously changing stream of that which from one viewpoint is believed
to be matter and from another a mind. However, what we call the mental and the material occurs in a unity of organization. Organization is something dynamic."

In discussing the continuity of mind or awareness in the absence of a self, various words and concepts have been employed. "Mindstream" is often used both colloquially and in more scholarly discourse, as when Dzogchen Rinpoche writes "[t]he Buddhadharma is a process, one through which we train and tame our own mindstreams. One approach is to go to the root of what we mean by 'I,' our sense of self or individual self-identity." According to scholar William Waldron, "Indian Buddhists see the 'evolution' of mind in terms of the continuity of individual mindstreams from one lifetime to the next, with karma as the basic causal mechanism whereby transformations are transmitted from one life to the next."

This clear evocation of what later became canonized in Buddhist discourse as middle way (Mādhyamaka) is key to tendering a description of the ineffable mysterium magnum of the "great continuum" that is rendered in English as "mindstream": the nondual interpenetration of ātman and anātman. This 'interpenetration' or 'coalescence' (Wylie: zung-'jug; Sanskrit: yuganaddha) is just a conceptual formation. Technically, the mindstream is subject to Buddha's fourfold reasoning, developed by Nāgājuna and known as the catuṣkoti, though the mindstream secures its nomenclature from the fourth pada: "neither one nor many", as this historically is the preferred subtle reification, but reification nonetheless.

Scholar Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids (1903: pp. 587–588) assesses Louis de La Vallée-Poussin's work on "mindstream" in Buddhism:

Professor de la Vallee Poussin finds a very positive evolution of vijnana-theory in certain Sanskrit-Buddhist texts. The term samtana is joined to or substituted for it — a term which seems to approximate to our own neopsychological concept of mind as a 'continuum' or flux. And he infers from certain contexts that this vijnana-samtana was regarded, not as one permanent, unchanging, transmigrating entity, as the soul was in the atman-theory, but as an "essential series of individual and momentary consciousnesses," forming a "procession vivace et autonome." By autonomous he means independent of physical processes. According to this view the upspringing of a new vijnana at conception, as the effect of the preceding last vijnana of some expiring person, represents no change in kind, but only, to put it so, of degree. The vijnana is but a recurring series, not a transferred entity or principle. Hence it is more correct, if less convenient, to speak, not of vijnana, but of the samtana of pravṛtti-vijnanani.

In Vajrayāna (tantric Buddhism) "mindstream" may be understood as an upāya metaphor for the nonlocal, atemporal stream of moments or "quanta of consciousness" (Sanskrit: bindu). It proceeds endlessly in a lifetime, in between lifetimes (Tibetan: bardo), from lifetime to lifetime, prior to engagement in the wheel of life, through samsara and beyond. It does so as an inclusive "continuum" rather than an individuated, separate, or discrete perceptual, cognitive, or experiential entity, as in the Buddhadharma conception of the ātman which is diametrically opposed to the Atman of the Upanishads.

In the entwined Dzogchen traditions of Bönpo and Nyingmapa, the mindstream
constitutes a continuum of *gankyil* composed of the five pure lights of the five wisdoms which unite the *trikāya*. These tantric correlations (or "twilight language") are evident in the iconographic representation of the *five Jinas* and the *sampenna-krama* of the *gankyil* and *mandala* in Dzogchen practice. The "supreme siddhi" or "absolute bodhicitta" of the Dzogchenpa is when the stream of their bodymind (*namarupa*) is "released" (in nirvana) as the rainbow body.

BUDDHIST SCHOLAR ALEXANDER BERZIN USES THE TERM "MENTAL CONTINUUM" IN TRANSLATION OF THE TIBETAN *SEMS-RGYUD* AND SANSKRIT *SĀṂTĀNA*, WHICH HE DEFINES AS "THE STREAM OF CONTINUITY OF MENTAL ACTIVITY (MIND, AWARENESS) OF AN INDIVIDUAL BEING, WHICH HAS NO BEGINNING, WHICH CONTINUES EVEN INTO BUDDHAHOOD, AND, ACCORDING TO MAHAYANA, HAS NO END. ACCORDING TO THE HINAYANA TENETS, IT COMES TO AN END WHEN AN ARHAT OR BUDDHA DIES AT THE END OF THE LIFETIME IN WHICH THE PERSON ATTAINS LIBERATION OR ENLIGHTENMENT. ALSO CALLED A 'MIND-STREAM.'"[11] THE DOCTRINAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE MINDSTREAM CONCEPT IN BUDDHIST TRADITIONS EVOLVED OVER CENTURIES AND VARIES TO SOME EXTENT BY TRADITION.


*Citta* is often rendered as *sems* in Tibetan and *saṃtāna* corresponds to *rgyud*, which holds the semantic field of "continuum", "stream", and "thread"--*Citta*-saṃtāna is therefore rendered *sems rgyud*. Interestingly, *rgyud* is the term that Tibetan translators employed to render the Sanskrit term "*tantra*".

*Thugs-rgyud* is a synonym for *sems rgyud*--*Thugs* holds the semantic field: "Buddha-mind", "(enlightened) mind", "mind", "soul", "spirit", "purpose", "intention", "unbiased perspective", "spirituality", "responsiveness", "spiritual significance", "awareness", "primordial (state, experience)", "enlightened mind", "heart", "breast", "feelings" and is sometimes a homonym of "citta" (Sanskrit). *Thugs-rgyud* holds the semantic field "wisdom", "transmission", "heart-mind continuum", "mind", " [continuum/ stream of mind]" and "nature of mind."

Chinese, Korean and Japanese

The Chinese equivalent of Sanskrit *citta-saṃtāna* and Tibetan *sems-kyi rgyud* ("mindstream") is *xin xiāngxù*. According to the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, *xin xiāngxù* means "continuance of the mental stream" (from Sanskrit *citta-saṃtāna* or *citta-saṃtati*), contrasted with *wú xiāngxù* "no continuity of the mental stream" (from *asaṃtāna* or *asaṃdhī*) and *shi xiāngxù* "stream of consciousness" (from *vijñāna-saṃtāna*).

This compound combines *xin* "heart; mind; thought; conscience; core" and *xiāngxù* "succeed each other", with *xiāng* "each other; one another; mutual; reciprocal" and
xu or "continue; carry on; succeed". Thus it means "thoughts succeeding each other".  

*Xin xiangxu* is pronounced *sim sangsok* in *Korean* and *shin sōzoku* in *Japanese*

**MENTAL "STREAM" METAPHORS**

The *metaphorical* use of "*stream*" to describe mentality is characteristic of but not unique to the Buddhist literature and worldview. In English for example, "*stream of consciousness*" is more familiar than "*mindstream*".

*William James* promoted the "stream of consciousness" with its particular nomenclature, some state drawn from Bain (refer following), whilst immersed in Buddhist studies and the accompanying protracted spiritual discipline of *vipaśyanā*, as related by Wallace (2003):

Buddhologist Roger R. Jackson similarly portrays Buddhist meditation as a type of ritual act (Jackson 1999:231). While such characterizations are certainly valid for some types of Buddhist meditation, they are profoundly misleading for the practices of meditative quiescence (*samatha*) and contemplative insight (*vipasyana*), which are the two core modes of Buddhist meditative training. Techniques of meditative quiescence entail the rigorous cultivation of attentional stability and vividness, methods having a strong bearing on William James’s psychological theories of attention (Wallace 1998, 1999a).

There are two entwined mindstreams according to the **two truths**, the absolute and relative, that are ultimately **non-dual** according to *Atiyoga*. One is the divine mindstream of "consciousness" which is engaged in the *phowa* practice, for example; the other the mindstream of thought and ideation (Tibetan: *sem*; Sanskrit: *manas*) (*vṛtti-citta*).

*Gyatso*, *Jinpa* and *Wallace* (2003: p. 97) identify two kinds of consciousness continua and associate the most subtle state of consciousness continuum, elsewhere identified in this article as the "mindstream substrate", with what is known in Tibetan Buddhist, Dzogchen and Bonpo discourse as "**clear light**" (Tib: ‘*od-gsal*):

In Vajrayāna Buddhism the subtlest state of consciousness is known as *clear light*. In terms of categories of consciousness, there is one type of consciousness that consists of a permanent stream or an unending continuity and there are other forms of consciousness whose continuum comes to an end. Both these levels of consciousness - one consisting of an endless continuum and the other of a finite continuum - have a momentary nature. That is to say, they arise from moment to moment, and they are constantly in a state of flux. So the permanence of the first kind is only in terms of its continuum. The subtlest consciousness consists of such an eternal continuum, while the streams of the grosser states of consciousness do end.

*Gyatso Rinpoche* (1994: p. 73) frames the importance of the stream metaphor in relation to meditation and the nature of mind, the objective of a meditative *sādhana*:

In the ancient meditation instructions, it is said that at the beginning
thoughts will arrive one on top of another, uninterrupted, like a steep mountain waterfall. Gradually, as you perfect meditation, thoughts become like the water in a deep, narrow gorge, then a great river slowly winding its way down to the sea, and finally the mind becomes like a still and placid ocean, ruffled by only the occasional ripple or wave.

Bucknell et al. (1986: pp. 112–113) find numerous references to a stream of thought and imagery:

In Buddhist literature the mental condition in which sequences of imagery and verbalizing run on endlessly is often compared to a flowing stream. We find in the oldest section of the Tipiṭaka the term "stream of consciousness" (viññāṇa­sotaṃ). The same metaphor is often found in the Tibetan literature. The guru Padma Karpo spoke of "thoughts...following one after the other as if in a continuous stream",[24] Mipham Nampar Gyalba observed, the "stream of images flows unbroken"; and in the Vow of Mahāmudrā, there is reference to 'the mind river'. This manner of speaking is also common at the present day. Tarthang Tülku refers to "the stream of mental images"[27] and 'the flow of thoughts and images'; and David-Neel, in a discussion of the meditation practices she observed in Tibet, speaks of "the continual, swift, flowing stream of thoughts and mental images..."

Psychology

The term, "stream of consciousness" was coined by the philosopher Alexander Bain in 1855 and later popularized by the psychologist, William James. Bain (1855: p. 380) wrote, "The concurrence of Sensations in one common stream of consciousness, — on the same cerebral highway, — enables those of different senses to be associated as readily as the sensations of the same sense." After originating in psychological theory, the "stream of consciousness" metaphor became more common in English usage, and was adapted into different contexts, for instance, the stream of consciousness (narrative mode) in literary criticism.

James' classic 1890 *Principles of Psychology* used several "stream" metaphors. Chapter 9, "The Stream of Thought" describes "the stream of consciousness" as constantly changing and "sensibly continuous":

> Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as "chain" or "train" do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A "river" or a "stream" are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. *In talking of it hereafter, let us call it the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life.*

"Mental stream" occurs in another context:

> The continuous flow of the mental stream is sacrificed, and in its place an atomism, a brickbat plan of construction, is preached, for the existence of which no good introspective grounds can be brought forward, and out of which presently grow all sorts of paradoxes and contradictions, the heritage of woe of students of the mind.
The psychologist Edward B. Titchener (1909: p. 19) used "mind-stream" to differentiate "mind" from "consciousness":

We shall therefore take mind and consciousness to mean the same thing. But as we have the two different words, and it is convenient to make some distinction between them, we shall speak of mind when we mean the sum-total of mental processes occurring in the life-time of an individual, and we shall speak of consciousness when we mean the sum-total of mental processes occurring now, at any given "present" time. Consciousness will thus be a section, a division, of the mind-stream.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINDSTREAM DOCTRINE

Koslowski (2003: p. 67, note 1) states that a suite of worldviews of Indic origin, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, are known collectively as 'Sanatāna traditions'. In the listing of seven notions that are common to the "Sanatāna traditions" Koslowski (2003: p. 74) identifies one of the seven principles as "Santati or Pravāha-ekatva" where 'santati' (Sanskrit) denotes "continuum" and 'pravāha' (Sanskrit) denotes "stream, river" and 'ekatva' (Sanskrit) denotes "one truth":

Santati or Pravāha-ekatva (Continuity of life from the beginning-less situation to the end): Process from the beginning-less state to the liberation of life-forms has a causal continuity. This continuity of life-form is terminated only on the attainment of its nature. Each life-form is an instance of continuum and embodies a unity of process it undergoes. Life-forms are condemned to be possessed with such a continuum except perhaps in the state of liberation (if your theory demands that). On the details of the nature of causal processes underlying continuity, different sub-traditions differ significantly, but reality of continuity of life-form is acceptable to all the sub-traditions. Formal continuity between one state of life to the other state of life is accepted irrespective of this or that state. All life-forms embody this continuity, but characterization of the continuum and its embodiment differs in the different sub-traditions.

For an understanding of the Buddhist traditions emergent in India and the development of their various views, it is important to affirm the dialogic forum of the Abhidharma as does King:

Buddhist philosophical debate in India took place within an Abhidharmic context.

As Chatterji (1931: pp. 206–207) states:

Now all the schools of Brahmanic philosophy have posited some permanent entity, i.e. soul as the cognizer to which cognition is variously related. The Buddhists have, however, denied the existence of any such permanent entity. The aggregates of rupa, samjna, samskara, vedana and vijnana, the first corresponding to what we call material elements and all the rest to mental elements - are the stuff of which an individual is made. Cognition which is not subservient to any intelligent being, is referred as
the samjna skandha or the vijnana skandha according as it is determinate (savikalpa) or indeterminate (nirvikalpa). The place of the transcendental atman is taken by vijnana. It is the continuity of cognition (santana) which holds together, unifies and synthesizes the fleeting moments of cognition and seems to give us the notion, though erroneous, of a subject or a knower acquiring knowledge both presentative (nirvikalpa or svalaksana) and representative (savikalpa or samanyalaksana). This is in general the Buddhist view on the nature of the pramatr or the subject. But there are some notable points of difference among the various schools.

Early Buddhist context
Karunadasa (1999, 2000) holds that early Buddhism and early Buddhist discourse "often refer to the mutual opposition between two views":

- "permanence" or "eternalism" (Pali: sassatavada) also sometimes referred to as "the belief in being" (Pāli: bhava-ditti); and
- "annihilation" or "nihilism" (Pāli: uchchadevada) also sometimes referred to as "the belief in non-being" (Pāli: vībhava-ditti).

As Buddha relates to Kaccānagotta in the Kaccānagotta Sutta as rendered in English by the Myanmar Piṭaka Association Editorial Committee (1993: p. 35):

For the most part, Kaccāna, sentient beings depend on two kinds of belief - belief that "there is" (things exist) and belief that "there is not" (things do not exist).

Karunadasa (1999) states:

...it is within the framework of the Buddhist critique of sassatavada and uchchadevada that the Buddhist doctrines seem to assume their significance. For it is through the demolition of these two world-views that Buddhism seeks to construct its own world-view. The conclusion is that it was as a critical response to the mutual opposition between these two views that Buddhism emerged as a new faith amidst many other faiths.

In Yogācāra
Mañjuśrimitra states in the Bodhicittabhavana, a seminal early text of Ati Yoga:

The mental-continuum (citta-santana) is without boundaries or extension; it is not one thing, nor supported by anything.

Mindstream is a conflation subsuming "heartmind" (Sanskrit: bodhi-citta) and "wisdom-mind" (Sanskrit: jñāna-dharmakāya; Tibetan: ye-shes chos-sku).

Lusthaus (n.d.) in mapping the development and doctrinal relationships of the store consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna), Buddha nature(tathāgatagarbha), Yogācāra, the self (ātman), Abhidharma, primordial substrative nature (prakṛti) and the mindstream states:

Several Yogācāra notions basic to the Abhidharma wing [of Yogācāra] came under severe attack by other Buddhists, especially the notion of ālaya-vijñāna, which was denounced as something akin to the Hindu
notions of ātman (permanent, invariant self) and prakṛti (primordial substrative nature from which all mental, emotional and physical things evolve). Eventually the critiques became so entrenched that the Abhidharma wing atrophied. By the end of the eighth century it was eclipsed by the logico-epistemic tradition [of Yogācāra] and by a hybrid school that combined basic Yogācāra doctrines with Tathāgatagarbha thought. The logico-epistemological wing in part sidestepped the critique by using the term citta-santāna, "mind-stream", instead of ālaya-vijñāna, for what amounted to roughly the same idea. It was easier to deny that a "stream" represented a reified self. On the other hand, the Tathāgatagarbha hybrid school was no stranger to the charge of smuggling notions of selfhood into its doctrines, since, for example, it explicitly defined the tathāgatagarbha as "permanent, pleasurable, self, and pure (nitya,sukha, ātman, śuddha). Many Tathāgatagarbha texts, in fact, argue for the acceptance of selfhood (ātman) as a sign of higher accomplishment. The hybrid school attempted to conflate tathāgatagarbha with the ālaya-vijñāna.

Capriles (2004: p. 35) defines the consciousness of the base-of-all (Skt.: ālayavijñāna; Tib.: kun-bzhi rnam-shes) as congruent with the mindstream and mentions vāsanā, bijas, and tathatā:

The consciousness of the base-of-all was not conceived as an immutable absolute, which is how the Atman of Hinduism is described; in agreement with the Hinayana idea of a succession of instants of knowledge, it was explained as a continually changing stream of consciousness (Skt., santana; Tib., gyü), and was said to be the vehicle that carries the karmic imprints (vasanas or bijas) that go from one life to the next. In turn, from the standpoint of experience, the consciousness of the base-of-all is an ample condition that yogis may find by absorption. Though the consciousness of the base-of-all is of the nature of thatness (Skt., tathata; Tib., dezhinnyi) — the absolute nature that is the single constituent of all entities — this consciousness is also the root of samsara.

The word "atman" is used in tathagatagarbha literature after being defined or re-qualified in a new, idiosyncratic way. The Buddha-Nature Treatise for example defines "self" as the perfection of the anātman-pāramitā. Thus one realizes his or her "true self" by perfecting his or her understanding of the truth of anātman.

Dzogchen (2007: p. 84) asserts an unsourced paraphrase or pastiche of a view attributed to Nagarjuna:

Nagarjuna says that the mindstream of every unenlightened being is permeated by the heart essence of buddhahood. The fundamental nature of our mindstreams is tathagatagarbha, or buddha nature, the seed and heart essence of an enlightened being. It is this quality that gives us the capacity to become buddhas.

The view in the direct quotation above is generally attributed to the Yogācāra. It is clear that the first sentence in the above quotation holds the position attributed to
Nāgārjuna. It is unclear whether the latter two sentences in the quotation are also that of Nāgārjuna, or alternatively the position of Dzogchen Rinpoche.

Waldron (2003: p. 178) renders Vasubandhu's Yogacara account from the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of cyclic causality (bhavacakra), kleśa and karma in relation to the mindstream:

...the mind stream (santāna) increases gradually by the mental afflictions (kleśa) and by actions (karma), and goes again to the next world. In this way the circle of existence is without beginning."

King (1998) holds:

Schmithausen offers a list of twenty uses which the concept of alayavijnana provided (14 'philosophical' and 6 exegetical) for the early Yogacarins. Most of these cluster around the explanation of personal continuity given the absence of an abiding-self, and providing a link between karmic action and subsequent fruition. The Sautrantika metaphor of the seed (bijā) became central in the case of the latter issue once the Vaibhasika conception of the existence of dharmas in past, present and future (the sarvastivada position) was rejected. However, as Schmithausen points out, although the Sautrantika postulated the notion of a karmic seed to establish causal continuity over time, the Yogacara seems to have felt that this required the further postulation of a store (alaya) consciousness as the repository of these seeds. Nevertheless, it is important to note at this point that the store-consciousness is by no means considered to be an ultimate reality in the works of either Vasubandhu the Yogacarin or Asanga, as has sometimes been suggested.

Dharmakīrti (fl. 7th century) wrote a treatise on the nature of the mindstream in his Substantiation of Other Mindstreams (Saṃtânāntarasiddhi). Ratnakīrti (fl. c7-8th century), a disciple of Dharmakīrti, wrote a work that further developed and refined the themes therein, entitled: 'Refutation of Other mindstreams' (Saṃtânāntarasudanā). He did not refute the tenets of the Saṃtânāntarasiddhi but leavened the nature of the issue from an empirical one, that is, where there are manifold minds cognized by one's experience of others' mental processes attributed through the perceived actions of other sentient beings that arise in one's continuum; to an absolutist view, where there is only "one mindstream" (ekacitta). Ratnakīrti's argument is that the valid cognition (pramāna) of another's mindstream is an inference (anumāna), not a direct perception (pratyakṣa). Moreover, Ratnakīrti introduced the two truths doctrine as key to the nature of the discussion as inference is trafficking with illusory universals (samanya), the proof of the mindstreams of others, whilst empirically valid in relative truth (saṃvṛtisatya), does not hold ultimate metaphysical certainty in absolute truth (paramārthasatya).

Dharmakīrti held to the doctrine of the mindstream as beginningless and yet also discussed the mindstream as a temporal sequence, and that as there are no true beginnings, there are no true endings, hence, the "beginningless time" motif that is imperative to understand the mindstream, as Dunne (2004: p. 1) relates:

"Buddhist philosophers often speak of beginninglessness. It is claimed that the minds of living beings, for example, have no beginning, and that
our current [U]niverse is only one in a beginningless cycle of expansion and decay. Some Buddhist thinkers would claim that even the most mundane task can have no true beginning. That is, if a beginning occurs, there must be some moment, some "now", in which it occurs. For the present to exist, however, there must be a past and a future, for what would "now" mean if there were no time other than now? And of course, if there is a past, then how could now be a beginning? Now should instead be the end of the past. Each beginning in short, must itself have a beginning.

Though a conceptual mystery, mindstream may be conceived as nonlinear and holistic. The medium and conduit of mindstream is æther or space and is unbounded by temporality or locality. Welwood (2000) describes it in this way:

If the contents of mind are like pails and buckets floating in a stream, and the mindstream is like the dynamic flowing of the water, pure awareness is like the water itself in its essential wetness. Sometimes the water is still, sometimes it is turbulent; yet it always remains as it is – wet, fluid, watery. In the same way, pure awareness is never confined [n]or disrupted by any mind-state. Therefore, it is the source of liberation and true equanimity.

Welwood (2000) introduces "pure awareness", the essence-quality of the mindstream, synonymous with natural mind. This is the primordial and principal constitutional consciousness of being. It is accessible by, and the point of origin of, all sentient beings. "Sentient beings" is a technical term in Vajrayāna denoting the mindstreams of all those consciousnesses not yet aware of the emptiness and fullness of perfection. Welwood (2000) links the mindstream with the three bodies (trikāya):

In terms of the Buddhist teaching of the three kayas, we could say that the contents of consciousness belong to the nirmanakaya, the realm of manifest form. The pulsation of the mindstream, with its alternation between movement and stillness, belongs to the sambhogakaya, the realm of energy flow. And the larger, open ground of awareness, first discovered in moments of stillness, is the dhammakaya, the realm of pure being (the thing-in-itself), eternally present, spontaneous, and free of entrapment in any form whatsoever.

The Buddhist and Bön teachings of mindstream and heartmind inform one another, as does bodymind. As Chodron (1991) states:

Just as the body is a 'continuity' even though it has parts, the mindstream or consciousness is also a 'continuity', although it has parts.

Hawter (1995) succinctly relates:

All of our actions lay down imprints on our mindstream which have the potential to ripen at some time in the future.

This should not imply that the mindstream is linear and only flows one way, but the mindstream is understood in the Himalayan tradition to flow all ways, always. For Morrell (1999):
The Mahayanists also contend that the mind forms a continuous, unending and unbroken mindstream or flow of consciousness, from beginningless time and indestructible. Thoughts and feelings in the mindstream are regarded as of supreme importance to Buddhist practice.

**Kelzang Gyatso** (1708-1757 CE), the 7th Dalai Lama is translated as stating:

[A]ll things in the world and beyond [a]re simply projections of names and thoughts. Not even the tiniest atom exists by itself, [i]ndependently [or] in its own right.

Therefore, the Universe is the thoughtform of the collective mindstream of all sentient beings (and there is nothing which is non-sentient; pansentience). This pansentient totality is the great continuum, the "great perfection" or "total completion" of Dzogchen and Ati Yoga where "shin-tu " holds the semantic field of "total", "complete", "absolute" and "rnal-'byor " holds the semantic field of "yoga"; Sanskrit: "Ati" holds the semantic field "primordial", "original", "first"; "yoga" holds the semantic field "communion", "union").

Étienne Paul Marie Lamotte (1903–1983) was a Belgian priest and Professor of Greek at the Catholic University of Louvain, but was better known as an Indologist and the greatest authority on Buddhism in the West in his time. He studied under his pioneering compatriot Louis de La Vallée-Poussin and was one of the few scholars familiar with all the main Buddhist languages: Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan. In 1953, he was awarded the Francqui Prize in Human Sciences.

He is also known for his French translation of the Da zhi du lun, (Sanskrit: Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra), a text attributed to Nāgārjuna. Lamotte felt that the text was most likely composed by an Indian bhikkhu from the Sarvastivada tradition, who later became a convert to Mahayana Buddhism. Lamotte’s translation was published in five volumes but unfortunately remains incomplete, since his death put an end to his efforts. In addition to the Da zhi du lun, Lamotte also composed several other important translations from Mahayana sutras, including the Suramgamasamadhi sutra, and the Vimalakirti sutra.

KERALA SIGHTS at 10:19 PM

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