

Upacāra According to Sthiramati

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The Yogācāra school claims that this real world we experience daily is merely consciousness (vijñāna). This opinion is interpreted to mean that when cognition (vijñāna) is applied, all the worlds (tri-dhātu) materialize.

This world consists of a subjective element and an objective element. Therefore, if the above interpretation is used, these two elements will be understood as different sides of cognition.

In that case, how cognition can have two elements (i.e. function as two sides) poses a problem. The Yogācāra school offer one of solution that says it is possible because cognition works in a certain way: it arises from two representations similar to subjectivity and objectivity.

That is, two objects of which we convince to exist in everyday recognition (i.e. two types of adherence, dvaya, grāhya and grāhaka) are only appearance that is similar to those objects of cognition (vijñāna), and the two types of adherence do not in fact exist. However, it cannot be denied that they are actually experienced.

Accordingly, the Yogācāra school interpret that nothing exists, but the two types of adherence simply appear as if exist. And it cannot be except through cognition (vijñāna) that the two types of adherence appear.

Therefore, formation of the real world according to the theory of Consciousness-only (vijñaptimātra) is that the two types of adherence appears in consciousness (vijñāna). To put it another way, although only the cognition (vijñāna) which has manifests itself various objects exists, it is thought by the fool that the real everyday world exists. This is the appearance of the world in the theory of Consciousness-only (vijñaptimātra).

However, how is the process in which only cognition (vijñāna) has manifested itself as an object and its appearance in this world specifically explained?

Sthiramati explains one interpretation using the concept of metaphorical expression (upacārā). In this paper, I will explain the interpretation of metaphorical expression (upacārā) by Sthiramati.