

Does the External World Exist? Idealistic Perspective in

Lankāvatāra Sūtra

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Idealism is the group of philosophies which assert that reality, or reality as we can know it, is fundamentally mental, mentally constructed, or otherwise immaterial. In contrast, the Yogācāra School, which arose within Mahayana Buddhism in India, based its "mind-only" idealism to a greater extent on phenomenological analyses of personal experience.

The founder of Yogācāra School was ven Asanga. Ven. Vasubndhu was a follower of Sarvastivāda Tradition and later on he became a follower of Yogācāra Tradition itself. He wrote three fundamental texts of Yogācāra Viññānavāda which should be ignored even though they assist to the theory of Vijñaptimātratā (consciousness only).

1. *Trisvabhāva-nirdeśa* (Treatise on the Three Natures)
2. *Viṃśatikā- Vijñaptimātratā* (Treatise in Twenty Stanzas)
3. *Trimśatikā- Vijñaptimātratā* (Treatise in Thirty Stanzas)

Lankāvatāra sūtra is one of the most important texts of the Mahayana Buddhism being included in the category of *Vaipulya* sutra. In East Asian Buddhist tradition, it becomes the most sacred text of the Soto Zen School. This sūtra, one of ninefold Sūtras (*navadharmā*), explains Yogācāra Viññānavāda. In the sūtra the theory of cause and effect is divided into two parts as Internal and External.

*“dviprakāraṃ mahāmate pratīyasamutpāda hetulakṣaṇa
sarvadharmānaṃ. yaduta bāhyañca adhyātmikaṃ ca”*

In that place External cause and effect theory is explained as follow.

*“tatra bāhya pratīyasamutpādo katamo? mṛutpiṇḍa daṇḍa cakra sūtra
udaka puruṣa prayatna ādī pratyair mahāmate ghaṭa utpadyate”*

Clay ball, stick, potter's wheel, string, water, effort of the potter and all together form the existence of pot. The pot means one of the things in external world. Therefore the existence of external world is accepted in Yogācāra Viññānavāda. The purpose of this paper is to affirm that the existence of the External World is not mere Idealism.

Key Words: *Yogācāra Viññānavāda, Lankāvatāra Sutra, Existence, External World.*