

## The Cardiac Theory of Consciousness and Body-Mind Relationship in Post-Canonical Pāli Scholasticism

Aloysius Pieris, s.j.

The cardiac theory of consciousness is most probably an appropriation of an old Vedantic theory, which has been set aside not only in the Pāli canonical texts and but even in the post-canonical writings of almost every school of Buddhism, but resumed by the Post-Abhidhammic scholiasts of the Pāli tradition. The significance of the theory lies in the Ābhidhammika principle that the mind cannot exist (which is to say, the mind cannot function) without the support of matter - a principle already accepted in the Suttas, but epitomized by the Pāli commentators in their neologism *vatthu-rūpa* and invoked as the rational foundation as well as the scriptural basis of their controversial position.

Since a *comprehensive* study of the cardiac theory of consciousness, to my knowledge, has not been undertaken so far, I present here not only an elaborate exposition of this theory from the data available in the Pāli Commentaries (Part I) but also a detailed discussion of the Scriptural exegesis and rational arguments employed by the Pāli exegetes in defending their theory against their adversaries (Part II). I conclude the investigation with a tentative reconstruction of the probable origin and development of this scholastic theory by