

On the First Verse of Vasubandhu's *Vimśikā*

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1. Introduction

Both at the beginning and in the first verse of his *Vimśikā* (Vimś) and his autocommentary *Vimśikāvr̥tti* (VimśV), Vasubandhu says manifestation-only (*vijñaptimātra) in the first verse and the beginning. Both the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Vimśikā* (Vimś (MS)) and its Tibetan translation (Vimś (Tib)) have the first verse, but the Tibetan translation of the *Vimśikāvr̥tti* (VimśV (Tib)) does not have the first verse and presents a similar sentence in prose. Among the Chinese translations the first verse is found in the translations of Prajñārucci and Paramārtha, while Xuanzang's translation does not have the first verse. Harada (2003, 150) discusses the presence or absence of the first verse of the *Vimśikā* and concluded,¹⁾ "at least the first verse of Sanskrit text of the *Vimśikā* was not composed by Vasubandhu himself, but may have been newly created and added for some reason by a later editor when he edited the *Vimśikā* by extracting the verses from the *Vimśikāvr̥tti*."

Therefore, in this paper, I would like to consider the existing texts of the *Vimśikā*, translations and commentaries, and present what I have found from them.

2. A comparison of *Vimśikā* and their translations

As noted above, some texts and translations have the first verse but some do not. Therefore, I classify the presence or absence of the first verse, and whether the sentence is in verse or prose, is as follows.

First verse exists (verse)	Without first verse (prose)
Vimś (MS), Vimś (Tib), <i>Weishi lun</i> , <i>Dasheng weishi lun</i> . Both of these have 22 verses.	VimśV (Tib), <i>Weishi ershi lun</i> . Both of these have 21 verses.

Corresponding sentences related to the first verse are as follows.

Viṃś 3.5:

vijñaptimātram evedam asadārhāvabhāsanāt | yadvat taimirakasyāsatkeṣaṇḍūkādidaśanam ||^[2]

Viṃś (Tib) 4.1–4: 'di dag rnam par rig tsam nyid || yod pa ma yin don snang phyir ||
dper na rab rib can dag gis || skra zla la sogs med mthong bzhin ||^[3]

ViṃśV (Tib) 30.10–11: rnam par shes pa 'di nyid don du snang ba 'byung ste | dper na rab rib
can rnams kyis skra zla la sogs pa med par mthong ba bzhin te ||^[4]

When comparing the Viṃś (Tib) and ViṃśV (Tib), there are clear differences, starting with the translation, as in *rnam par rig tsam* (*vijñaptimātra) and *rnam par shes pa* (*vijñāna). As for Dunhuang manuscripts, although some of sentences are different in phrasing, they are in agreement whether they are in verse or prose.^[5] In addition, in the *Weishi lun* translated by Prajñāruci (T. 1588. 31) and *Dasheng weishi lun* translated by Paramārtha (T. 1589. 31), the section is presented as a verse,^[6] and a summary of only the 22 verses are given at the beginning of the *Weishi lun* and at the end of *Dasheng weishi lun*.^[7] These summaries probably correspond to the Viṃś. On the other hand, in the *Weishi ershi lun* translated by Xuanzang (T. 1590. 31), this part, as noted above, is in prose,^[8] and there is no summary of just the verses, as in the *Weishi lun*. This suggests that Xuanzang likely did not refer to the Viṃś when translating the *Viṃśikā*.

3. Vinītadeva's commentary

We shall now consider the description of the commentary of the *Viṃśikā*. The commentary on the section in the ViṃśT (**Prakaranaviṃśikāṭikā*) by Vinītadeva is as follows.

rnam par shes pa 'di nyid don du snang bar 'byung ste zhes 'og nas 'byung ba yang de dang 'gal ba med do || ... gang gis snang snyam du dogs pa de la **rnam par shes pa 'di nyid du snang** zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos so || ...'dir dpe bstan pa'i phyir | **dper na rab rib can rnams kyis** zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos te | (ViṃśT, D 173b7–174b6; P 204b1–205b4)

It is not inconsistent with the later sentence “**this perception** (*vijñāna) manifests itself as an object.”... For those who doubt what is manifested by what, it is said that “**this perception manifests itself [as an object].**” To present an example, it is said “**for example, by Taimirika.**”

In the commentary to the beginning of the *Viṃśikā* in the ViṃśT, a phrase similar to the first verse of the Viṃś is quoted as prose rather than verse, *rnam par shes pa* as in the ViṃśV (Tib). From this it can be assumed that, like Xuanzang, Vinītadeva may not have

been referring to the *Viṃś*.

4. Vairocanarakṣita's gloss

Vairocanarakṣita's gloss *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* states as follows (Kano 2008, 349).

nārthaḥ kaścīd astītyantenārthavyākhyayā prathamakārikā bhāṣyeṇa vyākhyātā |
bhāṣyakāreṇoktāpy avyākhyātātvaṇ na śāstrakārasyeṇa iti kaścīd | tan na vedmi ||

By the commentaries up to *nārthaḥ kaścīd asti*, the first verse is explained by explanation of meaning. Someone says, "Although this [first verse] was said by the author of the commentary, since [this verse] is not explained, it is not by the author of the text (Vasubandhu)."⁹⁾

What is interesting about the above is that there are some theories that do not attribute the first verse to Vasubandhu. It is not clear to whom the "someone" here refers to, but it is clear that some people questioned whether the first verse of the *Viṃś* was by Vasubandhu. The description of the *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* suggests that, as Harada 2003 mentions, Vasubandhu's authorship of the first verse may be questionable.

5. [Kui]Ji's commentary

In [Kui]Ji's *Weishi ershi lun shuji* (T. 1834. 43), as has been pointed out in the previous studies, there is a criticism of the Prajñāruçi and Paramārtha translations.¹⁰⁾ The criticism is that the two translations renders passages in verse where they should not be in verse. It is not clear what the "three Sanskrit texts 三梵本" that [Kui]Ji mentions is referring to, but there is no corresponding to the *Viṃś* among the Sanskrit texts that [Kui]Ji referred to when he wrote the *Weishi ershi lun shuji*. Therefore, it can be assumed that he did not refer to the *Viṃś* in the same way as Xuanzang.

6. Conclusion

Finally, the correspondence of the texts related to the *Viṃśikā* which are mentioned above is as follows.

Corresponding to <i>Viṃś</i>	<i>Viṃś</i> (MS), <i>Viṃś</i> (Tib)
Corresponding to <i>ViṃśV</i>	<i>Weishi ershi lun</i> , <i>Viṃś</i> (Tib), <i>ViṃśT</i> , <i>Weishi ershi lun shuji</i>
Corresponding to both	<i>Weishi lun</i> , <i>Dasheng weishi lun</i>

A discrepancy in the number of verses in the *Viṃśikā* seems to have much to do with the authorship problem of the first verse mentioned in the *Viṃśikāṭīkāvivṛti* and in Harada

2003. In addition, if we look at the texts corresponding to the *ViṃśV*, the author of the *Weishi ershi lun*, *ViṃśT*, *Weishi ershi lun shuji* are Xuanzang, Vinītadeva, and [Kui]Ji and all of them are related to Nālandā. Therefore, it is highly likely that the *Viṃś* was not available to the scholar-monks in Nālandā.

Notes

- 1) Other studies on the first verse of *Viṃśikā* include Hanneder 2007 etc. 2) A similar verse is quoted in *Lokatattvanirṇaya*. See Silk 2016, 152. 3) For the relevant sentence of Dunhuang manuscript, see Silk 2016, 4. 4) For the relevant sentence of Dunhuang manuscript, see Silk 2017, 344. 5) See Harada 2003, 134. 6) *Weishi lun* (T. 1588. 31, 64b): 如偈言, 唯識無境界故。引證者, 如偈言, 以無塵妄見故。譬喻者, 如偈言, 如人目有翳見毛月等事故。 *Dasheng weishi lun* (T. 1589. 31, 70c): 實無有外塵, 似塵識生故, 猶如瞽眼人, 見毛二月等。 7) *Weishi lun* (T. 1588. 31, 63c): 唯識無境界, 以無塵妄見, 如人目有翳, 見毛月等事。 *Dasheng weishi lun* (T. 1589. 31, 74a): 實無有外塵, 似塵識生故, 猶如瞽眼人, 見毛兩月等。 See also Harada 2003, 136–138. 8) T. 1590. 31, 74b–c: 內識生時似外境現, 如有眩瞽見髮蠅等。 9) For a translation, see Kano 2008, 353. 10) T. 1834. 43, 982b: 眞諦頌云, 實無有外塵, 似塵識生故, 猶如瞽眼人, 見毛兩月等。 菩提流支云, 唯識無境界, 以無虛妄見, 如人目有翳, 見毛月等事。理雖不違, 勘三梵本, 並無此頌。但譯家增論。

Abbreviations

- Viṃś* *Viṃśikā* (Vasubandhu). See Silk 2016.
Viṃś (MS) Sanskrit manuscript of the *Viṃś*.
Viṃś (Tib) Tibetan translation of the *Viṃś*. See Silk 2016.
ViṃśT *Prakaranaviṃśikāṭikā* (Vinītadeva). D 4065 ; P 5556.
ViṃśV *Viṃśikāvṛtti* (Vasubandhu). See Silk 2016.
ViṃśV (Tib) Tibetan translation of the *ViṃśV*. See Silk 2016.

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