

An Analytical Study of the Establishment of 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) is the Sphere of the Enlightened One; with Reference to the *Viṃśatikā* (Twenty Verses) by Vasubandhu

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Introduction

The Cambridge Online Dictionary defines the mind as the part of a person that enables them to think, feel emotions, and understand things. People who lived in ancient times did not have a clear understanding of the physical causes that affect humans and believed that observed phenomena existed in the world because of numerous spirits. This notion came to be known as the concept of God, subsequently identified as Monotheism. However, the notion of monotheism turned into polytheism over time.

Vasubandhu was a prominent Indian Buddhist philosopher who lived in the 4th-5th centuries CE, identified as a master of both *Abhidhamma* and *Yogācāra*. Vasubandhu was the exponent of *Yogācāra* idealism, who was a *Sautrāntika* but was converted to the new faith by his older brother Asaṅga (D.J. Kalupahana, 1976). The contribution of Vasubandhu to the *Yogācāra* was immense. This is mainly because he has become the central figure in this particular tradition, having composed several treatises to enhance the teachings of *Yogācāra*. It is believed that he was born in Gandhara to a Brahmin family.

In terms of Buddhist philosophy, *Ācharya Vasubandhu's* work of *Abhidharmakośa* considered as a comprehensive verse summary related to the Buddhist philosophy. In relation to Vasubandhu's *Yogācāra* contribution, the main treatises, such as the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā* (Thirty Verses on Consciousness Only) and the *Viṃśatikā* (Twenty Verses), are represented as the foundation of *Yogācāra* texts. The establishment of the mere concept (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) of the Vasubandhu is dealing with one of the main treatises, *Viṃśatikā* (Twenty Verses), is consisting with twenty two verses, and it is a concise work describing the doctrines of "Mind Only", asserting that what we perceive as external objects are establishment of consciousness. Vasubandhu is arguing that it is not possible to see the independently existing external objects, and all arises from consciousness. So, what we perceive as an external reality depends on mental representation.

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Research Problem

The concept of 'Mind Only' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) is represented in the two treatises of Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikā* and Thirty Verses, assuring that all phenomena that we perceive are mere representations of the consciousness, refuting the independent existence of external objects. *Viṃśatikā* is paving the path to the sphere of the Enlightened One.

As far as the concept of 'Mind Only' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) is concerned, there are insufficient scholarly works related to the progress of the practitioner towards Buddhahood. Vasubandhu's *Viṃśatikā* describes the analogy of dream and the Yogācāra perspectives of the atom become hard to discern for the meditation practitioner since it is the sphere to the Enlighten One. This study therefore investigate that the establishment of 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) is the sphere of the Enlightened One, and through that, how does Yogācāra mediation practitioner leads to the supreme state of Nibbāna.

Context and Background

The origin and development of this tradition was based on several philosophical doctrines, such as the concept of Mind Only (*cittamātratā*), the theory of three natures identified as (*trīsvabhāva*), and the eightfold classification of consciousness. However, this tradition, developed under the name of *Yogācāra*, consists of two words: yoga and *ācāra*. This tradition was known by various names, including *Vijñānavāda* (doctrines of consciousness) and *cittamātra* (mind only).

Relevance and Significance

The concept of 'mind-only' (*vijñaptimātra*), formally presented by Vasubandhu consisting central doctrines of the Yogācāra tradition focusing on the threefold transformation of the consciousness adherent to the two more consciousness apart from the Pāli Buddhist perspective. It addresses a profound philosophical explanation of consciousness and its dividends. This study is relevant, this is mainly due to the fact that it critically analyses the importance of idealistic norms, along with interpreting perception, subject, object and illusion.

Objectives

To make a comprehensive idea on origin and evolution of Yogācāra idealism.

To obtain sufficient knowledge of the biography of Vasubandhu.

To investigate the philosophical foundation of the 'mind only' concept in *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* elaborated by Vasubandhu.

Research Methodology

This research implements a qualitative methodology centering to the philosophical, textual, and comparative analysis. The analytical methodology is centering to examine the conceptual aspect of the mind-only doctrine. The primary sources include the Yogācāra texts and *Tipiṭaka* texts. The Secondary Sources include, such as academic books, journal articles, commentaries, sub commentaries and etc.

Results

Everything is mind or representation only (*vijñaptimātram evaitat*) because there is the appearance of a non-existent object.

The practice of meditator should reflect all the phenomenal as in dreams.

The efficacy of an action is like the nocturnal emission of semen by a dreamer.

Impressions related to the mere appearances that arise from their own seeds.

One realizes the selfness of the Dharma by means of the mind only teachings.

Existence of the atom is not proved.

Discussion

In terms of Mahāyāna Buddhism, it flourished with two major traditions, such as Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. The tradition, which was known as Yogācāra, initiated by Vasubandhu, was identified as a faithful follower of Mahāyāna Buddhism, introducing the new concept to Buddhist philosophy as an idealist. Therefore, Vasubandhu introduced the concept of *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* through the two major works of his, known as *Vimśatikā* (The Treatise of Twenty Verses) and *Trimśikā* (The Treatise of Thirty Verses).

Vasubandhu is seeking to establish 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) through the *Vimśatikā* (The Treatise of Twenty Verses), leading to the path of attaining to the Supreme State in Buddhism known as Buddhahood. With the inception of The Twenty Verses *Vimśatikā*, Vasubandhu is asserting the fact that "everything is mind or representation only (*vijñaptimātram evaitat*) because there is the appearance of a non-existent object"... (Thomas, 1991, p.97).

According to the idealist view of the representation only, the objection arose on the grounds of two facts, such as space and time, along with the efficiency of actions. The practice of meditator should reflect all the phenomenal as in dreams, as follows:

"svapnopaghātavat kṛtya-kriyā narakavat-punaḥ

sarvaṃ naraka-pālādi-darśane taiś-ca bādhane"

"The efficacy of an action is like the nocturnal emission of semen by a dreamer. All these things are just as in hell, for in hell everyone sees the same hell guardians, etc. and are tormented by them". (Thomas, 1991, p.97).

In terms of the efficacy of the action, the guardians of the hell described by Vasubandhu proved that everything that ordinary people have grasped and achieved is just a mere mental representation. Furthermore, Vasubandhu claims that the guardians of hell do not experience the suffering of hell. The reasons why does Vasubandhu presented this argument is that animals are not born in either heaven or hell not only that but also the ghosts are not born in heaven or hell.

The idealists have often used the analogy of a dream to explain the "Mere concept" *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi* in order to realize the external objects are mental representations. When everything is a mental fabrication, then what would be the efficacy of the action? Vasubandhu explicates that the efficacy of the action is similar to the emission of semen by a dreamer.

The opponents raised the question, "Why do not you just say that the cause (kāraṇa) impression of the deed are in the same place"(Thomas, 2009, p.98). Vasubandhu answers that impressions related to the mere appearances that arise from their own seeds. Furthermore, it is explained that one realizes the selfness of the Dharma by means of the mind only teachings.

Apart from the simile of the dream presented by Vasubandhu to explicate the Yogācāra notion of the concept of mind only, the elucidation of the atom (*paramāṇuḥ*) made a tremendous contribution to realizing for the meditation practitioner the perceptual object. Moreover, the Yogācāra notion of the atom has spread into the wide rage this is mainly because the idealists explicate the atom as partlessness (*anavayavatva*). Therefore, "the perceptual object is neither a unity, nor a multiplicity nor an aggregate of atoms, because the existence of the atom is not proved" '*na tad-ekam na cānekaṃ viśayaḥ paramāṇuśaḥ - na ca te saṃhatā yasmāt paramāṇur-na sīdyati*'. (Thomas, 1991, p.99).

Conclusion

In conclusion, through the establishment of 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*), Vasubandhu endeavours to emphasize the sphere of the Enlighten One, pointing out the characteristic of knowledge related to the one who does not attained to the Buddhahood. This is mainly because the knowledge of the unenlightened people is inherited in their own minds, referred to as the fact of non-knowledge (*ajñāna*), and Vasubandhu's attempt through the *Vimśatikā* was what the Buddha sees and it is the domain of knowledge. Therefore, the establishment of 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*) is the sphere of the enlightened one, which enable for the Yogācāra to attain the supreme state of Nibbāna.

Keywords - A dream, Atoms, Idealists, 'Mere Concept' (*Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*), Yogācāra

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