

Dhyāna in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma:
A Study based on the
Abhidharmakośabhāṣya and its Sanskrit
and Chinese commentaries

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Date

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We certify that this dissertation, titled "Dhyāna in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma: A Study based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and its Sanskrit and Chinese

commentaries" of Ven. Wei Shan is his own work and that he has successfully

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Abstract

This thesis deals with “*Dhyāna* in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma based on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and its Sanskrit and Chinese commentaries”. Of the Buddhist schools, Sarvāstivāda was certainly the most powerful one in north-west India even at the beginning of the Christian era. It was not only related to Theravāda, Sautrāntika and Vibhajyavāda etc, but also had a great influence on the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, such as Yogācāra which is considered in some respects as a Mahāyānist modification of Sarvāstivāda. *Dhyāna* in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma is almost a new subject that has not yet been examined in detail by modern scholars; and therefore, for a proper understanding and a proper perspective of the development of Buddhist meditation, an in-depth study of the doctrinal development of meditation in the Sarvāstivāda period is exigent.

In the thesis the main content of my study consists of fourteen chapters. The introductory chapter deals with pre-Buddhist meditation in ancient India, meditation in early Buddhism and Mainstream Buddhist meditation and with an introduction of the Sarvāstivāda and its corresponding school. Chapter II explains some technical terms, such as *upapatti*, *samāpatti*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi* and so on.

Chapter III introduces the three *dhātu*-s namely *kāma*-, *rūpa*- and *ārūpa*-*dhātu*-s. Although the two higher *dhātu*-s are the comfortable spheres, human world is considered the best for meditation. Chapter IV is devoted to describe the controversy

on the *ārūpyadhātu*. The Sarvāstivādin-s deny there is matter in the *ārūpyadhātu*, whereas the Vibhajyavādin-s etc. refute the Sarvāstivādin opinions, maintaining that there is subtle matter in it.

Chapter V begins the study of the *asaṃjñi-* and *nirodha-samādhī-s* comparatively, through which one can see the similarities and differences of interpretation on these two attainments given by the Sarvāstivādin-s, Theravādin-s and Vijñānavādin-s. Chapter VI deals with the controversies regarding whether or not there is thought in the *asaṃjñi-* and *nirodha-samāpatti-s* and discusses the differences between the *nirodha-samāpatti* and *nirvāṇa*.

Chapter VII involves the classification of the *dhyāna* factors (*aṅga*), how and why these factors are established and what are differences between the happiness in the first two *dhyāna-s* and that in the third *dhyāna*. Chapter VIII attempts to discuss the three kinds of *samāpatti-s* (i.e. *āsvādanā*, *śuddhaka* and *anāsrava* attainments) and *sāmantaka-s*.

Chapter IX attempts to discuss the basis of the fruit of an *arhat* which are the nine attainments (i.e. the first seven plus *anāgāmya* and *dhyānāntara*) except the *naivasamjñā nāsamjñāyatana*. The four *dhyāna-s* are considered as the easy route to *nirvāṇa*, of which the fourth *dhyāna* is more emphasized in cultivation as the Buddha obtained enlightenment and entered *parinirvāṇa* particularly through the fourth *dhyāna*. This chapter also explains as to how one is reborn in a heaven or is free from *samsāra* when one has obtained an attainment, gives the three reason of arising of the

attainments in the higher *dhātu*-s and tells us the virtues of the cultivation of the *āhyāna*-s.

Chapter X discusses the various kinds of *samādhi*-s: A) the three *samādhi*-s: *samādhi* with *vitarka* and *vicāra*, *samādhi* with *vicāra* but without *vitarka* and *samādhi* without both; B) the three *samādhi*-s: *śūnyatā-samādhi*, *apraṇihita-samādhi* and *ānimitta-samādhi*; C) the three other *samādhi*-s: *śūnyatā-śūnyatā*, *apraṇihita-apraṇihita* and *ānimitta-ānimitta*; D) the four cultivations of *samādhi*.

Chapter XI analyzes the feature of the *vajropama-samādhi* which is special knowledge with great power by which all the defilements can be eradicated. When one obtains it, one will not be injured by floods and weapons such as knife etc.

Chapter XII deals with the four immeasurables (*apramāṇa*) namely Loving-kindness (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekṣā*), their *ākāra*-s, objects, and *bhūmi*-s, as well as how to practice them. Chapter XIII elaborates on the eight *vimokṣa*-s, eight *abhibhvāyantana*-s and ten *kṛtsnāyatana*-s and introduces their establishment, objects, acquisitions, and differences.

The concluding chapter deals with the number of attainments a Noble One has accomplished and discusses the basic difference of opinions regarding meditation, the issues involved in the arguments, and the development of meditation theory in the northern tradition.