

The Declaration of the Candidate

Jñāna in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma:
 A Study based on Vasubandhu's
Abhidharmakośabhāṣya and its Sanskrit
 and Chinese commentaries

Candidate's signature

The Declaration of the Supervisors

This dissertation, titled "Jñāna in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma: A Study based on Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and its Sanskrit and Chinese commentaries" of Ven. Yuan Liu, is his own work and that he has successfully completed it under our supervision. We recommend the submission of this dissertation to the Postgraduate Institute of Pāli and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Knowledge (*jñāna*) or wisdom (*prajñā*) is of central importance in Early Buddhism, in which *jñāna*, *prajñā* and some other terms are used without much distinction. During Abhidharma Buddhism, however, this importance is more specifically emphasized by the very definition of abhidharma, the highest sense of which is none other than the pure *prajñā* defined as discernment of *dharma* (*dharma-pravicaya*). It also means the pure *jñāna*, as *jñāna* here is explained as having *prajñā* as its self-nature (*svabhāva*). This is the explanation of Sarvāstivāda, one of the most influential schools of the time. This thesis tries to represent the *jñāna* theories of this school based on available sources both in Sanskrit as well as in classical Chinese.

In order to give a full picture of the *jñāna* theories of Sarvāstivāda, this thesis begins with the discussions of the concept of *jñāna*, in which distinctions between *jñāna* on the one hand and *prajñā* (understanding), *dr̥ṣṭi* (View), *kṣānti* (receptivity) etc. on the other, are carefully examined. According to Sarvāstivāda, *jñāna* must be a thorough, final and decisive understanding, whereas *dr̥ṣṭi* is judgmental in nature (*saṃtiraṇātmaka*), and *kṣānti* still has an element of doubt (*vicikitsā*). They are all different modalities of *prajñā*, which is regarded as a distinct force or real entity (*dravya*), known as a Universal dharma (*mahābhūmika-dharma*), which makes possible the aspect of understanding in all mental functioning.

Followed by this discussion, there is a very detailed classification of the ten *jñāna*-s of Sarvāstivāda in chapter three. In the course of discussion, the nature, scope of the ten *jñāna*-s, together with controversies involved, are also explained.

Ājñāna, whose nature is none other than the operation of *prajñā* with regard to the four noble truths, is an extremely important doctrinal perspective of the ten *jñāna*-s of Sarvāstivāda, because it is through this perspective that we understand how a pure

jñāna regarding to the four noble truths is obtained. The detailed explanation of these ten *jñāna-s* also includes several other doctrinal perspectives, such as their moral nature, stage (*bhūmi*), basis (*āśraya*), relationship with the four applications of mindfulness (*smṛti-upasthāna*) together with the applicable *dharma-s* of the ten *jñāna-s*, the endowment of the ten *jñāna-s*, the cultivation of the ten *jñāna-s* and so on. These doctrinal perspectives are the main discussions of chapter five.

Chapter six, seven and eight constitute the second part of this thesis, dealing with the virtues/qualities (*guṇa-s*), which are made up of *jñāna-s*. Chapter six explains the unique virtues of the Buddha-s, namely the eighteen unique Buddha-dharma-s (*āṣṭādaśa Buddha-dharma-s*). Chapter seven explains the virtues of the Buddha, which are common to the disciples (Śrāvaka-s), namely the knowledge of non-dispute (*aparānjñāna*), the knowledge of resolution (*praṇdhijñāna*) and the unhindered knowledges (*pratisaṃvit*). Chapter eight explains the virtues of the Buddha, which are common to the ordinary people (*pṛthagjana*), mainly the six supernormal knowledges (*abhiññā-s*).

Through the discussion of the differences of virtues or fruits of *jñāna* of the Buddha and the others, one may see that a significant difference of the *jñāna-s* of the Buddha on the one hand and the Arhat on the other is implied. An important reason for this is that the Buddha can cut off defilements together with their traces (*vāsanā*), whereas the Arhat can also cut off defilements but their *vāsanā* remains.