

BOOK REVIEWS

STUDIES IN ABHIDHARMA LITERATURE and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems. By Erich Frauwallner. Translated by Sophie F. Kidd and Ernst Steinkellner. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 160. ISBN 07914 2700 5 (PBK)

THIS IS A TRANSLATION into English of the late Professor Frauwallner's *Abhidharma-Studien*, a fine product of the latest period of his brilliant scholarly career. Consisting of eight essays serially published between 1963 and 1973 mostly in *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, the present work deals with the beginning and early development of doctrinal thought in the history of Indian Buddhism. In the first four essays the author investigates the nature and tendencies of the earliest Abhidharma literature as well as features of the pre-systematic doctrine it comprises. In the remaining four essays he examines in detail the first formation of systematic philosophical thought as found in the next stage of Abhidharma history.

The extant source material for studying Abhidharma thought comes, by and large, from two schools only: the Theravāda and the Sarvāstivāda. The texts belonging to the former are preserved in Pāli, while those of the latter are found mainly in Chinese recensions. The author is naturally concerned with both of these schools, but his distinguished contribution to this field of study is clearly his clarification of the course of systematization of thought by which the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma gradually became the first coherent system of philosophy in the history of Buddhism.

In this review, I would like to take up and survey the seventh essay entitled "The Abhisamayavāda,"¹ in which the author tries to clarify the process by which the Sarvāstivāda sages established the theory of liberation, which is considered to be the core of their doctrine.

I would agree with the author in considering the *Abhidharmasāra* (*A-p'i-t'an-hsin-lun* 阿毘曇心論 [T. 1550], sometimes restored as *Abhidharmahr̥daya*) as the best starting point for the present investigation, as this *śāstra* represents the earliest dogmatics of the Sarvāstivāda. It is controversial, however, to say

¹ Here, *abhisamaya* is a synonym of *darśana*, thus *abhisamayavāda* means the doctrine of beholding the Four Noble Truths.

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that the *Abhidharmasāra* came earlier than the *Jñānaprasthāna* (*Fa-chih-lun* 發智論; T. 1544, 1543). Some scholars place the *Abhidharmasāra* between the *Jñānaprasthāna* and the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*Ta-p'i-p'o-sha-lun* 大毘婆沙論, T. 1545), while others, on the basis of the fact that the theories of *paramāṇu* (atoms) and of *caitasika-sahotpāda* (the co-arising of mental factors) are found in the *Abhidharmasāra* and not in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, even think that the *Mahāvibhāṣā* may have preceded the *Abhidharmasāra*. That Tao-yen 道誕 mentions the name Dharmasrī 法勝, the author of the *Abhidharmasāra*—a fact which Frauwallner cites (p. 152)—may not be incontrovertible evidence in support of Frauwallner's opinion. Even the appearance of the name Dharmasrī in the *Ch'u-yao-ching* 出曜經 (T. 212; a Chinese translation of a recension of the *Udānavarga* with its commentary), which was pointed out by Lin Li-kouang,² may not sufficiently certify that the author of the *Abhidharmasāra* preceded Dharmatrāta, a master of the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

As explained in the fifth chapter of the *Abhidharmasāra*, the path of liberation through which *anuśayas*³ (latent evil tendencies) are eliminated consists of *darśanamārga*⁴ and *bhāvanāmārga*.⁵ This idea of *darśana*- and *bhāvanāmārga*, Frauwallner argues, is a new paradigm wholly unlike anything in the old canon. Though certain models (such as *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. II, pp. 38–39)⁶ from which the new Abhidharmic doctrine of the path seems to have derived exist, they were thoroughly reformulated in the newly-developed Abhidharma literature.

The author then proceeds upon a close examination of the question of how the Abhidharmic idea of the path of liberation was established in the course of the growth of such reformulations. He tries to find the steps taken from the "archaic way of thinking" of the old canon to the "consistent philosophical thought" of the *śāstra*,⁷ from the simple enumeration of seven *anuśayas* to the formation of the elaborate 98 *anuśaya* theory, from the mere juxtaposition of the cognition of the Four Noble Truths and the cognition of the *āsravas* to the

² See his *L'aide-mémoire de la vraie loi*, p. 390.

³ Factors that cause entanglement in the cycle of existences.

⁴ The path of insight in which the Fourfold Noble Truth is perfectly realized.

⁵ The path of cultivation in which the realization acquired in the path of insight is cultivated and nurtured through the repeated contemplation practices.

⁶ See *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings (Majjhima-Nikāya)*, Vol. II, The Middle Fifty Discourses [*Majjhimapaññāsa*], trans. from the Pāli by I. B. Horner, Pāli Text Translation Series no. 30 (London: Luzac & Co., 1957); pp. 38–39 of the Pāli text (*Cūla-Sakuludāyisutta* [Lesser Discourse to Sakuludāyin]) appear on pp. 234–236 in the English translation.

⁷ Post-canonical doctrinal works.

theory of practice through the *darśana*- and the *bhāvanāmārga*. In this way, the original usages in the old canon of each of the technical terms, which were here employed in the Abhidharmic system, are searched for systematically, and later changes of their meaning in Abhidharmic thinking are reexamined.

The author's conclusions on the basis of such an examination is that the new doctrine, incorporating old canonical concepts, recast and reused them for its own purposes, and that it intended to establish a causal relation between the so-called liberating cognition and the disappearance of the *āsravas*⁸ (depravity; lit., "outflows").

Frauwallner calls what is found in the *Abhidharmasāra* "the new doctrine" and regards it as "a conscious and unique creation" by its author, Dharmasīri. He thus praises Dharmasīri—not Vasubandhu—as "the great dogmatician of the Sarvāstivāda," saying that Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* "is ultimately nothing but an extended reworking of the *Abhidharmasāra*."

Dharmasīri's significant role as the first person to systematize Abhidharmic thought is widely acknowledged and highly estimated among scholars. However, there are various views as to what motivated Dharmasīri to undertake such a systematization, or what he intended in so doing.

Frauwallner is quite right in saying that *darśanamārga*, as a unique process of cognition, can eliminate errors and doubt (*darśanaprahātavya*, 'what is to be eliminated by insight'), but that the elimination of passions (*bhāvanāprahātavya*, 'what is to be eliminated by cultivation') demands continuous effort (in *bhāvanāmārga*) because their eradication of those passions is accomplished [only] by the repeated realization of the relevant knowledge attained beforehand through *darśanamārga*. That much may be sufficient, in my opinion, to explain logically the reason why the practice of *bhāvanāmārga* is placed after finishing the course of *darśanamārga* in the path of the *āryapudgalas*⁹ (the sages). Therefore, it disturbs us that Frauwallner says, "The idea that certain *anuśayā* require repeated contemplation of the cognized Truths to be eliminated, logically led to the *bhāvanāmārga* being put *before* the *darśanamārga*" (p. 175, l. 14; italics mine). Here, the word *before* should be amended as "after," the mistake apparently being due to a translator's error.¹⁰

In the case of the *prthagjanas*¹¹ (ordinary people, worldlings), however, we meet with another course of practice. The canon suggests that the *prthagja-*

⁸ Defilements that entangle existences. The term *āsrava* is thus considered synonymous with *anuśaya*.

⁹ Those who have entered in *āryamārga*, i.e., the pure undefiled (*anāsrava*) path.

¹⁰ Frauwallner's original reads: den *bhāvanāmārga* nach dem *darśanamārga* anzusetzen.

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nas, even non-Buddhists, may be able to eliminate some of the *anusayas*. In this case the path for eliminating the defilements is through the contemplation on the inferior state of the *prthagjanas*' own existence, not on the Four Noble Truths. Therefore, while the path does not belong to the *āryamārga*, it is nevertheless regarded as a sort of *bhāvanāmārga*, a *laukika*¹² *mārga*. Hence, this *laukika bhāvanāmārga* for the *prthagjana* naturally comes before his entering the *darśanamārga*, the first step of the path of the *āryapudgala*¹³ (the sage). Therefore, it would be better to say that the *bhāvanāmārga* "does not bring forth its fruit immediately" on account of its being *laukika* (worldly), than to say, "because the *bhāvanāmārga* only becomes effective through it [the *darśanamārga*]" (p. 176).

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This review was edited by Robert Kritzer.

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ON MY WAY to Sōgen-ji in Okayama in August 1994 I stopped a few days in Kyoto, where Jeff Shore from the F. A. S. Society had invited me to join a small supper party at Ryōsen-an in Daitoku-ji. It was fifteen years since I had left Kyoto after having trained at Sōhaku Kōbori Ōsho's temple Ryōkō-in. At that time we sat in the zendō of Ryōsen-an in the morning, cleaned the garden and had tea with its caretaker Ueno-san. It was a time full of memories, and so I was naturally moved by this opportunity to see Ryōsen-an again after all these years. I must admit that I was a bit disappointed to find that the nice little zendō, a miniature of that of the Daitoku-ji Sōdō, had been transformed into a hondō. I realised that Ryōsen-an was not used anymore as a place where western seekers without knowledge of Japanese could come and have their first Zen training. The western "study room" in Ryōsen-an with the extensive English library had not been in use since its abbess, Mrs. Ruth Fuller Sasaki, died in 1967 and was, I am sorry to say, still not in use in 1994.

¹¹ Those who have not yet entered into *āryamārga*, and who therefore are not *āryapudgala*.

¹² Worldly, defiled (*sāsrava*), not *ārya*, not *anāsrava*.

¹³ One who has entered in *āryamārga*, i.e., the pure undefiled (*anāsrava*) path.