

Vinaya through an Abhidharma Lens: The Case of Saṃprajānamṛṣāvāda

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Introduction

Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized that the relationship between Vinaya and Abhidharma is far more complex than the traditional picture of two genres of Buddhist literature might suggest. For example, Gregory Schopen famously observed that monastic jurists appear to have applied “the same sort of care and precision that their colleagues working on the Abhidharma applied to the classification and definition of *dharmas*” to monastic law (Schopen 2005: 6). Schopen’s observation echoes an earlier point made by Oskar von Hinüber, who, through a detailed philological examination of the Vinaya and Abhidharma materials, drew attention to the ways in which analytical methods developed within the Vinaya tradition may have provided an important methodological foundation for the formation of the Abhidharma (von Hinüber 1994: 120). Yet how analytical methods associated with Abhidharmic doctrine operated in the opposite direction, contributing to the transformation of the Vinaya corpus and the interpretive traditions surrounding it, has received comparatively little scholarly attention. It is this question that the present paper seeks to address.

Objectives

Focusing on the offense of *saṃprajānamṛṣāvāda* (deliberate false speech), this paper argues that Abhidharmic traditions actively intervened in the transmission and diversification of canonical Vinaya texts and their exegetical traditions, thus changing the understanding of certain monastic offenses and laws within Vinaya traditions.

Methodology

This paper employs a comparative philological approach grounded in a broad cross-linguistic corpus of Buddhist sources, including Vinaya and Abhidharma materials from different *nikāyas*, mainly Mūlasarvāstivāda, Sarvāstivāda, Dharmaguptaka, Mahāsāṃghika, Mahīśāsaka and Theravāda, preserved in Sanskrit, Pāli, Chinese, and Tibetan.

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The Vinaya materials examined include both the canonical Vinaya texts and their exegetical traditions. Where the textual evidence permits, divergences in the latter are taken as possible evidence of Abhidharmic influence. The Vinaya texts themselves present greater difficulties due to uncertainties of transmission and translation. Accordingly, a relationship with Abhidharma is attributed only where an exegetical layer can be reasonably hypothesized, while other correspondences are treated more cautiously as parallel or mirroring developments.

Results

By examining how Abhidharmic conceptual frameworks influenced the interpretation of the offense of *saṃprajānamṛṣāvāda* and related sections across different Buddhist schools from three perspectives: the definition of “*saṃprajāna*”, underlying temporal metaphysics, and karmic agency, I argue that the transmission and divergence of certain Vinaya texts, along with the different interpretations they generated, interacted dynamically with Abhidharma tradition and, in some cases, were directly reshaped by the Abhidharmic doctrines of their respective Buddhist traditions.

Discussion

(1) First, the paper investigates how Abhidharmic doctrines on perception altered the meaning of the term “*saṃprajāna*” in the precept against deliberate false speech. Although the *Prātimokṣasūtras* generally have similar formulations, *i.e.* “if [a *bhikṣu*] deliberately (*saṃprajāna*) utters false speech, a *pāyantika* offense is incurred”, their commentarial traditions differ regarding what exactly constitutes such awareness. While the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*, *Sarvāstivāda*, *Mahāsāṃghika*, *Mahīśāsaka*, and *Theravāda Vinayavibhaṅga* provide a similar fourfold classification, the list in the *Dharmaguptaka Vinayavibhaṅga* is unique, in that its third member is “觸” (**spṛṣṭa*), whereas the counterpart in the other texts is “覺”/“知” (**mata*). Moreover, the possibility that “觸” in the *Dharmaguptaka Vinayavibhaṅga* represents another translation of “覺” is excluded, since the translators use “覺” in similar lists elsewhere in their translations.

By referring to an Abhidharmic debate on how to explain Buddha’s words in the *Damu jing* (“大母经”), this article discusses how together with the increasingly refined definitions of mental events in Abhidharmic tradition, the interpretation of a relatively straightforward Vinaya precept becomes dependent upon sophisticated exegetical models and epistemological distinctions.

(2) Second, this paper demonstrates that Abhidharmic temporal metaphysics fundamentally influenced the criteria for determining whether an offense is committed or a ritual action is effective. The *Mūlasarvāstivāda Vin*

ayavibhaṅga distinguishes three forms of awareness associated with lying: “I will lie (*du smra bar bya'o*, 我當妄語)”, “I am lying (*du smra'o*, 我正妄語)”, “I lied (*du smras so*, 我已妄語)”. Yet only the conjunction of present and past awareness also suffices for the commission of *samprajānamṛṣāvāda*, and no single cognition alone constitutes the offense. By contrast, the Dharmaguptaka *Vinayavibhaṅga* allows several combinations in which awareness of the present act alone is sufficient. These different interpretations reflect deeper metaphysical assumptions. The Sarvāstivādin position corresponds to a system in which past, present, and future *dharma*s exist, whereas Dharmaguptaka materials underline the efficacy of the present.

Significantly, a parallel structure appears in a discussion in the *Kaṭhinavastu*, where ritual validity is similarly connected to temporal metaphysics. Dharmaguptaka *Kaṭhinavastu* even provides an explicit doctrinal justification attributed to the Buddha: “the past has ceased and the future has not yet arrived” (過去已滅, 未來未至). Such evidence suggests that debates concerning the nature of time and the existence of *dharma*s did not remain confined to scholastic treatises but shaped the interpretation of certain Vinaya prescriptions.

(3) Third, the paper addresses the question of karmic agency, specifically, whether an offense can be generated by mind alone. Whereas the first two points focus on the Vinaya texts themselves, this third point shifts attention to the interpretive traditions surrounding the Vinaya and examines how they interacted more closely with Abhidharma traditions. The *Prātimokṣasūtras* of multiple schools have the formula that a *bhikṣu* who remains silent during the *poṣadha* despite remembering an unconfessed offense incurs *samprajānamṛṣāvāda*. This case generated extensive controversy because it involves false speech without speech. The Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinayasamgraha* explains this by arguing that bodily signs function as manifestations of verbal intention. However, the Chinese translation preserves an alternative opinion absent from the Tibetan version, namely that this constitutes an offense “committed solely by mind” (唯是意所犯罪).

This interpretation has important parallels in Abhidharmic discussions. The *Mahāvibhāṣā*, representing the orthodox Sarvāstivādin position, explicitly recognizes cases in which false speech occurs without verbal expression, while the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, from a Sautrāntika perspective, challenges the Sarvāstivādin position on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the Sarvāstivādin account of *avijñapti*. Saṅghabhadra’s *Nyāyānusāra*, representing an orthodox Sarvāstivādin response to this critique, subsequently attempts to resolve this difficulty. It is noteworthy that Saṅghabhadra’s interpretation corresponds to the first explanation found in the *Vinayasamgraha*, while the view of “some other

teachers” (and Vasubandhu’s possible implication) is not inconsistent with the second explanation preserved in its Chinese translation.

These scholastic debates are mirrored in classifications of offenses in Vinaya interpretive traditions: some traditions explicitly deny the possibility of purely mental offenses, whereas others incorporate or preserve traces of such a category, showing how inherited Vinaya interpretations were altered in response to evolving Abhidharmic theories of *karman*.

(4) Taken together, these three case studies on semantic distinctions concerning awareness, underlying metaphysical assumptions, and the conditions for incurring an offense reveal that the boundary between Buddhist jurisprudence and scholastic philosophy was considerably more fluid. Abhidharmic debates were continuously echoed in the Vinaya corpus and its exegetical traditions, contributing to their transformation and diversification.

Keywords- Vinaya, Abhidharma, *saṃprajānamṛṣāvāda*, *Kaṭhinavastu*, *avijñapti*

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學術 修行 解脫相融合：再思考當代大乘佛教實踐研究

(Synthesizing Scholarship, Spiritual Practice, and Liberation: Rethinking Research on Contemporary Mahayana Practice)

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摘要

佛教傳入中國後，契合菩薩種姓特質，衍生出以解脫生死、覺悟有情、住持正法為根本宗旨的中國化大乘佛教。當代語境下，經典傳譯流變、教法闡釋多元、相似佛法與附佛外道混雜，對正法傳承構成嚴峻挑戰。出家僧眾作為佛法傳承的核心載體，兼具四重身份，其學術研究、修行實踐、正法弘揚、並服務社會。在此之前，菩薩行者必須以經律論為根本，以止觀雙修為解脫路徑，以菩提心與六度萬行為核心，以慈悲善巧播散正見，方能正本清源、自利利他、紹隆三寶。

本研究立足大乘核心教義，系統探討當代大乘佛教實踐研究的目標、問題、方法論與路徑，闡明“學術護教、止觀解脫、菩提為要、慈悲利生”的整體邏輯，為當代大乘佛教健康發展及僧眾弘法利生提供理論與實踐支撐。

一、研究目標

本研究核心是實現學術、修行、弘法、利生的有機融合，具體目標為：

1. 正本清源，通過嚴謹學術研究梳理文獻、辨析正邪，確立原始經典權威，杜絕錯謬教法；
2. 修證解脫，以經律論為準則，闡明止觀雙修的必要性，指引僧眾依教修行、眾生隨根機證得三乘菩提；
3. 彰顯大乘，闡釋菩提心、菩薩戒與六度四攝要義，夯實大乘行持根基；

4. 構建一體化路徑，融合學術、修持、弘法與社會服務，實現大乘佛教可持續發展。

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二、研究問題

結合當代大乘實踐現狀，本研究聚焦五大核心問題：

如何通過學術研究確認大乘經典權威，有效辨別邪法與相似佛法？

大乘止觀雙修作為三乘菩提核心路徑，其原始經典內涵與實踐方法是什麼？

中國大乘僧眾發菩提心、受菩薩戒、修六度萬行的經典依據與實踐路徑如何？

僧眾如何以慈悲為基，善巧開展正法宣說、心理疏導、臨終關懷等社會服務？

5. 如何構建“學術—修持—弘法—利生”一體化體系，實現自利利他與正法長遠發展？

三、研究方法論

一是文本分析法，以經論為核心，梳理核心要義、考據文本權威，遵循“四依”原則；

二是質性方法論，闡釋止觀解脫價值，探討菩提心的核心意義，剖析修行誤區；

三是比較研究法，對比大乘與小乘的發心、大小乘止觀差異，辨析佛教與世俗臨終關懷的區別；

四是跨學科綜合法，融合宗教學、佛教心理學、臨終關懷學，實現“學術—實修—行願—關懷”的有機銜接，兼顧學術價值與社會價值。

四、結果與討論

（一）學術研究：以原始經典為基，護持正法之本

學術研究是大乘僧眾護教弘法的重要前提，核心在於確認原始經典權威而非知識堆砌。當代僧眾應以學術為工具，長時間深入經律論三藏，堅守佛教導的四依法，確立正見、辨析邪說，守護正法傳承。

如經云《金剛般若波羅蜜經》：“若是經典所在之處，即為有佛，若尊重弟子。”

如經云《大般涅槃經》卷六：“依法不依人、依義不依語、依了義不依不了義、依智不依識”。

（二）修行實踐：以止觀雙運為要，解脫生死之苦

大乘菩薩以“解脫生死、證得佛果”為終極目標，止觀雙修是核心路徑。其中，“止”（奢摩他）指的是心一境性，令心調柔寂靜。“觀”（毗婆舍那）以智慧照見實相，斷除煩惱障和所知障。二者相輔相成、定慧等持。有些行者存在偏定或偏慧的誤區，背離佛陀“戒為基、定為體、慧為用”的教導，唯有三學增上、依八正道修行，證得三乘菩提。

如經云《解深密經》：“眾生為相縛，及為粗重縛，要勤修止觀，爾乃得解脫”。又《瑜伽師地論》卷十三云：“所作及所緣，亦瑜伽止觀，作意與教授，德菩提聖教。”

（三）大乘行持：以菩提心為本，六度四攝為行

大乘僧眾與小乘行者的核心區別，在於受菩薩戒、發“上求佛道，下化眾生”的菩提心、廣修六度四攝。其中，菩薩戒保障身口清淨，六度（佈施、持戒、忍辱、精進、禪定、般若）是菩提心的具體落實，四攝（佈施、愛語、利行、同事）是菩薩利益他人的方法。大乘菩薩行是原始佛教的發展，將個人解脫與眾生解脫相融合，彰顯“無緣大慈”，僧眾應以身示範，以六度和四攝利益眾生，踐行“不忍眾生苦，不忍聖教衰”的使命感。

如經云《華嚴經》：“菩提心者，猶如種子，能生一切佛法；菩提心者，猶如大地，能載一切眾生”。

（四）社會奉獻：以大慈悲為懷，善巧方便利生

慈悲濟世是大乘佛教的根本精神品質，僧眾應關注眾生現世安樂與究竟解脫。大乘慈悲心的核心是依經宣說正見，引導眾生斷惡修善，遠離愚癡和痛苦。對當代社會人們的身心焦慮，僧眾應以正見為導，與時俱進弘法，尤其在臨終關懷領域，可依託淨土宗信、願、持名法門，依止《淨土五經一論》，引導臨終者稱念佛號、發願往生，破除死亡恐懼，安穩離世，這是契合當代眾生根器的殊勝方便。

如經云《大智度論》卷二十七：“大慈與一切眾生樂，大悲拔一切眾生苦”。

又《佛說無量壽經》第十八願云，“設我得佛，十方眾生至心信樂欲生我國，乃至十念，若不生者，不取正覺，唯除五逆、誹謗正法。”

（五）一體化體系：學術、修行、弘法、利生的融合

本研究提出“學術護教—止觀證果—菩提行願—慈悲利生”一體化體系，四者相輔相成：學術為正法提供依據，修習大乘止觀為三乘菩提確立路徑，菩提心是大乘佛教核心，慈悲利生是佛教的社會價值。無學術則

正法不明，無修行則解脫無望，無菩提心則大乘不立，無慈悲心則佛法不活，這一體系構成當代大乘僧眾完整的修行與弘法路徑。

五、結論

本研究結論：大乘僧眾一切行持，必須以經律論為根本，以止觀雙修為解脫核心，以菩提心為大乘佛教的根本，以大慈悲心為利生動力。學術研究的終極意義是守護正法，修行實踐的核心是解脫，大乘行持的關鍵是踐行菩提願力，社會奉獻的本質是慈悲利生。唯有將四者融為一體，方能弘揚正法、紹隆三寶，使佛教回饋社會、普利有情，這既是佛的本懷，也是當代大乘僧眾的歷史使命。

關鍵字：正見；聞思修；大乘止觀；解脫；弘法利生

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