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A Comparative Study of Theravada and Sarvastivada Canonical Abhidhamma



Ven. Chan Fook Peng
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Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies
University of Peradeniya
Sri Lanka
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ABSTRACT

Abhidhamma is the Higher Teaching of the Buddha. It presents the quintessence of His profound doctrine. The *Dhamma*, embodied in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, is the conventional teaching, and the *Abhidhamma* is the ultimate teaching. However, traditional views regarding the origin and authenticity appear to have been questioned both in the Buddhist tradition itself and also in recent critical studies. Some scholars have said that the *Abhidhamma* is not the exact words of the Buddha himself. On the other hand, J. Takakusu mentioned that *Theravāda* and *Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma* works have no real connection, either in form or content, though they both agree in the total number of their works. I find this to be unconfirmed by a closer examination of the relevant literature of the two traditions. I think there obviously is some connection and agreement between the form and content of these texts. So, the aim of my dissertation is to make a close investigation in order to find out if there are any differences between *Theravāda* and *Sarvāstivāda* regarding the form and content of their *Abhidhamma* literatures.