Abhidharmakosa Study Materials

Chapter VIII: Samapatti (Attainments)

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Basic outline of Chapter VIII Karika

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K39 How Long will the Dharma Last?
K40-43 Closing Stanzas (A kind of epilogue for the Abhidharmakosa as a whole)
Overview: Meditation is the underlying condition for awakening & the path; the dhyānas are “the support of all qualities.” “Knowledge depends on the concentrations to proceed unshakably” [-Dharmatīra]. Ch VIII also continues the explication of qualities which Buddhas have in common with arhats & ordinary persons outlined in Ch VII, K35, which lays out the contents of Ch VIII: Dhyānas, Arupyas, Samapattis, Samadhis, Apramanas, Vimokṣas, Abhībhāyatānas, Kṛtsnayatānas.

Terminology:

Dhyāna 靜慮, 定: Two contexts: i) Upapatti-dhyāna: dhyāna as existence discussed in chapter III (and in Ch VIII, K12-13). ii) Samapatti-dhyāna: dhyāna as absorption discussed here in chapter VIII.

Meditation, reflection, trance (a shift in awareness cultivated intentionally, usually in an upright & still sitting posture). “In general, Dhyāna as absorption is defined as an application of a pure mind on a single object, for the Dhyānas have samadhi or concentration for their nature…What is the meaning of the word dhyāna? By reason of dhyāna the ascetic is ‘concentrated’ and capable of upanidhyāna. Upanidhyāyai signifies ‘to know truly’, as it is said in the Sutra, ‘He who is concentrated knows truly’. In the School [of the Sarvastivadin], all dhyāna is praṇa [whereas in some other schools, dhyāna is cintā or reflection]…If the Dhyānas are absorptions or samadhis, then are all absorptions,—good, bad, or neutral,—Dhyāna? No. Only absorptions filled with certain excellences are called Dhyānas …What are the excellences? Samadhi is in fact excellent: it is an absorption filled with ‘parts’, which goes by the means of the yoke of calmness (samatha) and insight (vipasyāna) [in which calmness & insight are in equilibrium], that is termed in the Sutra ‘happiness in this world’ and ‘the easy path’ (see VI.66), the path by which one knows better and easily. It is thus the excellent absorptions which are called dhyāna.” Arhats are necessarily adepts in the 8 basic dhyānas.

Samadhi 三摩地, 定: Concentration, meditation (lit: “putting together”) [D22]. Samadhi is the unity of the object with the mind (cittaikagrata)[II.24], this is the dharma by virtue of which the mind, in an uninterrupted series, remains on an object [VIII.1]. Vaiśhāśikas teach samadhi as a mental factor present in all minds, but because of its weakness, it is not that all minds are concentrated. Samadhi as a dharma is a distinct force: “What is called samadhi is a certain dharma by which the minds are concentrated, applied on a single object.” Further, “Samadhi causes the second mind to not be distracted or turned aside from the object of the first mind.” In the Bhasya, the Sautrantikas criticize the Vaiśhāśika view of samadhi: “The Sautrantikas say that the minds which have the same object constitute samadhi: samadhi does not exist separately.” Samadhi can refer to the dhyānas or concentrations based in the dhyānas (sunnyatasamadhi, vajropamasamadhi, etc.)

Samapatti 别定: Attainment, ecstasy. Vasubandhu seems to use this term in particular to distinguish the dhyānas as meditative states, in contrast to the dhyānas as realms of existence. Samapatti refers to the 8 fundamental dhyānas (mula-dhyāna) & the attainments of extinction (nirodha-samapatti [D64]) & of non-thought (asamjnī-samapatti [D63]) (see Ch II K42-44).

Cittaikagrata心一境性: One-pointedness (unification) of mind, single-mindedness, undivided attention. Definition of samadhi. Samantaka 近分: Preparatory stage, threshold, neighboring. 8 dhyānas each have a samantaka. Pali correlate: upacara (access). Anagamyam未至: “Not yet arrived”. This is the samantaka of the 1st dhyāna. “Neighborhood concentration”. Although not yet the 1st dhyāna, one is considerably concentrated. Required for cultivation of nirvṛheda-bhāgiyas (Ch 6) & Path of Seeing. Dhyānatara中静慮: Intermediate dhyāna (between 1st and 2nd dhyānas). Vitarka has been discarded, but there is still vicara.

Rupa 色: Form (note complexities of this term). Note: there are 3 distinct meanings of this term in the Abhidharmakosa: i) Rupa as material form, the first skandha, consisting of the 5 sense-organs, the 5 sense-objects, & avijnapti [D11]. ii) Rupa as visible matter, the object of the organ of sight [D6]. iii) Rupa as “pure form” or “fine materiality” as dhyāna states & realm of form (Rupadhatu), free from desire (kama), transcending Kamadhatu (desire-realm), where humans, animals, hell-beings, pretas, & 6 levels of devas, live.

Arupya無色: Formless, non-form, immateriality. (Transcends even the subtle materiality of Rupadhatu.)

Vitarka 思: Reasoning [D53]. The gross state of the mind. [In Theravada: initial application of thought (to an object).] Vicara 伺: Investigation [D54]. The subtle state of the mind. [In Theravada: sustained application of thought.]

Priti 懐: Joy, rapture, interest.

Sukha 楽: Happiness, agreeable. [Note: there is a controversy regarding the coexistence of sukha & priti in the 1st and 2nd dhyānas. This is why sukha is equated with prasrabdhi (well-being, pλιαντία [D25]) below.]

Adhyatmasamprasadā內智: Internal (adhyāmokā) purity or faith (prasrada (=sraiddha [D23])): “What is the dharma called ‘internal purity (or faith)’? When the agitation of vitarka and vicara has come to an end, the series flows calmly and clearly: this is what is called internal purity. As a river agitated by waves, so too the series, by reason of the agitation of vitarka and vicara, is not calm or clear. [Say the Sautrantikas.] But if we admit this explanation, then internal purity is not a thing in and of itself. Thus there will not be eleven things in the Dhyānas. Then one must say K9c. Purity is faith. Purity (prasrada) is a thing in and of itself, namely faith (sraiddha). When the ascetic acquires the Second Dhyāna, he produces a profound faith: he admits that the spheres of absorption themselves can be abandoned. This faith is called internal purity. Faith, having purity (prasrada, vi.75) for its characteristic, is called purity. Having abandoned externals, it flows equally and so prasrada is internal and equal; hence it is termed ‘internal purity’ or adhyatmasamprasadā.” [K9c]

Upeksa upekkha: Equanimity, indifference [D26]. In the 3rd dhyāna, “joy which is free from movement toward any object.”

Smṛti 念: Mindfulness, memory [D19]. In the 3rd dhyāna, “not losing sight of the motive or reason [nimitta] for this equanimity.”

Samprajñājñ: Awareness, complete knowing, recollection, clearly comprehending. In the 3rd dhyāna, “awareness relating to this mindfulness.”
I-VIII: 8 Stages (bhumi) (地):
Maula-Dhyana (根本静慮) (Fundamental Dhyanas) [K1-9]
[Samantakas in K21-23]
<<K2: another presentation of parts of dhyanas (dhyananga) emphasizing the dropping away of factors in the dhyanas. All 4 are filled with samadhi which grows stronger in each stage>>
[2 parts of each dhyana: Maula (dhyana proper) & Samantaka]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Samantaka: Anagamya</th>
<th>[equanimity]</th>
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</table>
| I. The 1st dhyana: 5 parts:
1. *vitarka* (reasoning)
2. *vicare* (investigation)
3. *priti* (joy)
4. *sukha* (happiness)
5. samadhi (concentration)
[Superior to the first dhyana, but inferior to the 2nd Samantaka. The other spheres, unlike the 1st, do not have a higher and a lower.] |
| P1: *vitarka* and *vicare* are opposed to the bad minds of Kamadhatu; *priti* and *sukha* are obtained when *vitarka* and *vicare* have expelled their opposites; *samadhi* through whose force the four other parts exist. |
| P2: *adhyyatmasampraprasada* is opposed to *vitarka* and *vicare*; *priti* and *sukha* constitute the part of excellence. |

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<th>2nd Samantaka</th>
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| II. The 2nd dhyana: 4 parts:
1. *adhyyatmasampraprasada* (faith, internal purity of faith)
2. *priti* (joy)
3. *sukha* (happiness)
4. *cittaikagatra* (samadhi)
[4 parts: *vicare, priti, sukha, samadhi*] |
| P3: *upeksa* and *samma-prajanya* are opposed to *priti*; *sukha* is the part of the excellence. |

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<th>3rd Samantaka</th>
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| III. The 3rd dhyana: 5 parts:
1. *upeksa* (equanimity)
2. *smrti* (mindfulness)
3. *samma-prajanya* (awareness)
4. *sukha* (happiness) [=sukha vedana (agreeable sensation)]
5. *sthiti* (samadhi) |

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<th>4th Samantaka</th>
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| IV. The 4th dhyana: 4 parts:
1. *smrtipariparidhi* (pure mindfulness)
2. *upekshapariparidhi* (pure equanimity)
3. *adukkhaksukhavedana* (sensation of neither suffering nor happiness)
4. *samadhi* (concentration) |
| P4: *upekshapariparidhi* and *smrtipariparidhi* are opposed to *sukha; adukkhaksukhavedana* is the part of excellence. |

3 types of absorption (K5-6, K10, K14-18):

- *Klista* (defiled) – *asvadana-samapattib* absorption of enjoyment (患), associated with thirst (which clings & relishes). Defiled: 1st dhyana does not include *priti & sukha*, because it is not separated from the defilements of Kamadhatu, 2nd dhyana does not include *adhyyatmasampraprasada*, because it is troubled by the defilements which make it unclear, 3rd dhyana does not possess *smrti & samma-prajanya*, because it is confused by a defiled happiness, 4th dhyana does not possess *smrtipariparidhi & upekshapariparidhi*, because it is soiled by the defilements. According to others, there is no 1) *prasrabdhi (= sukha)* in the first two Dhyanas, and 2) no *upeksa* in the last two, because *prasrabdhi* and *upeksa* are *dharmas* that are only found in a pure mind. Associated with thirst, these absorptions have their own existence (*bhava*) for their object (see Ch V K2: *bhava-raga*).

- *Suddha* (pure) – good (*kusala*), worldly/mundane concentration. Pure absorption is the object of the absorption of enjoyment (when one grasps at the absorption, it ceases to be pure and becomes defiled but is still concentrated by virtue of the absorption of enjoyment). Pure absorption is of 4 types:
  1. of falling (*hanabhagiyati*), tends to lead to the arising of the defilements.
  2. of duration (*sthiti-bhagiyati*), tends to lead to its own sphere.
  3. of progress (*vivesabhagiyati*), tends to lead to a higher sphere.
  4. of penetration (*nirvedhabhagiyati*), tends to lead to undefined absorption.

- *Anasrava* (undefined) – this absorption is transworldly/super-mundane. Undefined, it cannot be the object of grasping. Thus, it is not the object of an absorption of enjoyment. The defilements are abandoned through undefined absorptions. The 1st 7 absorptions are 3-fold, the 8th is 2-fold - it is not *anasrava* because of the weakness of idea (and thus insight). Dhyanataras may be defiled, pure or undefined. K14-18 explore which types of absorptions (including the pure sub-types) can and cannot follow upon each other.

**Samantakas** are exclusively pure and associated with the sensation of equanimity, “because one traverses them through effort, because the abhorrence of the lower sphere has not yet disappeared, and because they are the Path by which one detaches oneself from the lower sphere. Therefore they only contain the sensation of equanimity and they are not associated with enjoyment.” The 1st Samantaka, Anagamya, may be undefined. Samantakas do not have parts.

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<th>V. The 1st Arupya-dhyana</th>
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<td>Akasanantya</td>
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<th>VI. The 2nd Arupya-dhyana</th>
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<td>Vijnananantya</td>
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<th>VII. The 3rd Arupya-dhyana</th>
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<td>Akimcanya</td>
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<th>VIII. The 4th Arupya-dhyana</th>
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<td>Naivasamjna-nasamjna-Canyata</td>
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**Vibhuta-rupa-samjna**: “Those who have conquered the idea of physical matter”

Absorption of non-thought (*asamjna-samapattib*), realized by non-aryans from the 4th dhyana.
Absorption of extinction (*nirodha-samapattib*), realized by Aryans from Bhavagra.

→ → → going across, increasing subtl (refinement) of the idea → → →
On the Fourth Dhyana [K11]: “As it is free from the eight faults (apaksaśalas), the Fourth is undisturbed (sa-injita)...The eight faults are vitarka, vicara, happiness, suffering, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, inbreathing, and outbreathing. None of these eight is found in the Fourth Dhyana: this is why it alone is termed ‘undisturbed.’”

On the Arupya-dhyanas [K4]: 4th dhyana is the highest development of concentration. Moving onto the four Arupya-dhyanas, one is not becoming more concentrated. Rather, each proceeds through separation from the prior state. Vasubandhu states that the first 3 are named after their preparatory exercises [one can contemplate other objects once in the dhyana]. One separates from rupa itself by meditating on infinite space and arrives at the 1st Arupya-dhyana. By separating even from infinite space as an object, and meditating on infinite consciousness, one arrives at the 2nd Arupya-dhyana. By separating even from the consciousness, and meditating on nothingness, one arrives at the 3rd Arupya-dhyana. Finally, by separating from the nothingness, there is “Peak of Existence”, Bhavagra, neither-ideas-nor-absence-of-ideas. Here, Vasubandhu states: “The Fourth Arupya receives its name from the fact that samjna, ‘ideas,’ is very weak in it. Ideas are not active in it, but neither is it completely without ideas. Without doubt, one prepares himself for this Arupya by considering, ‘Ideas are a sickness! Ideas are an ulcer! Ideas are an arrow! The absence of ideas is stupidity! This is calmness, this is excellent, the Faculty of Neither-Ideas-Nor-Absence of Ideas!’ But it is not by reason of this preparatory exercise that the Fourth Arupya receives its name. And why is the Fourth Arupya conceived of, by the ascetic who finds himself in the preparatory absorptions, as Neither-Ideas-Nor-Absence of Ideas? It is because of the slightness of the ideas (samjna) in it.” Vasubandhu affirms that there is no rupa in the Arupyas (some claim that there is some subtle rupa in the Arupyas).

Dhyanas & Spheres [K19-20]: The dhyanas and arupyas are cultivated by beings of their sphere or of a lower sphere. Beings of a higher sphere do not cultivate a dhyana of a lower sphere, except beings in Bhavagra, who must enter the undefiled absorption of Akimcanya in order to destroy the defilements pertaining to Bhavagra.

Samadhi: In karika 23, the discussion turns from samapattis to samadhis: “The Sutra says that there are three types of samadhi: 1) samadhi with vitarka and vicara [=1st dhyana and any samadhi supported by the 1st dhyana], 2) samadhi without vitarka but with vicara [=dhyanatara], and 3) samadhi without vitarka and vicara [=2nd dhyana & above].” Samadhis, along with the immeasurables, vimoksas, abhibhavayatanas, krtsamayatanas (below), are cultivated in, and flow out of, the dhyanas.

3 Samadhis [K24-27]: 1. the absorption of emptiness (sunyatasamadhi)[emptiness 空]
2. the absorption of the absence of characteristics, (animittasamadhi)[signlessness 無相]
3. the absorption of the absence of intention (apranihitasamadhi) [wishlessness 無願]

These 3 samadhis are discussed in terms of the 16 aspects of the 4 Noble Truths (analyzed in Ch VII):
1. The absorption of emptiness is associated with 2 aspects of the 1st Noble Truth: emptiness (3.) and non-self (4.).
2. The absorption of the absence of characteristics is associated with the aspects of the 3rd Truth of cessation: extinction (9), calm (10), excellent (11), and salvation (12). “Why does it receive this name? Because Nirvana or extinction, being free from ten characteristics (nimitta) is called animitta. The absorption that has Nirvana for its object is thus animitta. The ten characteristics or mark (nimitta) are: 1-5) the five ayatanas, external sources of the sense consciousnesses, physical matter (rupa), sound, etc.; 6-7) male and female; and 8-10) the three characteristics of conditioned things (the samskrlabalaksanas, ii.45), arising, duration-and-change, and death.”
3. The absorption of the absence of intention is associated with the 10 aspects: impermanence (1.), suffering (2.), cause (5.), arising (6.), appearance (7.), condition (8.), path (13.), truth (14.), obtaining (15.), and definitive release (16). “The absorption that grasps these ten aspects is turned toward the passing beyond of things that are impermanent, suffering, arising, and the Path [which, like a raft, is left behind]; it is then called apranihitasamadhi, free from pranidhana, the will or desire for something. On the contrary however, Nirvana, under these four aspects and as the object of the absorption of the absence of intention, should not be abandoned; and the last two aspects of the Truth of Suffering, namely emptiness and non-self, the object of the absorption of emptiness, do not provoke dread, for these two aspects belong to Nirvana as well as to conditioned things.”

These three samadhis are of two types: they are pure (suddhaka) when they are worldly, and they undefiled (anasrava = amala (immaculate)) when they are transworldly (existing in the sphere of the path). When they are undefiled, they are also called the “Three Gates to Deliverance” (vimoksha-mukha) because they lead to Nirvana.

There are three further samadhis, which have the above samadhis for their objects:
1. absorption of the emptiness of emptiness (sunyatasunyatasamadhi)
2. the absorption of the absence of intention in the absence of intention (apranihitaparanihitasamadhi)
3. the absorption of the absence of characteristics in the absence of characteristics (animittanimittasamadhi)

Samghabhadra: “In the same way that one burns the wood of the funeral-pyre which first burned the body, so too when the absorption of emptiness burns the klesas, the ascetic namely produced sunyatasamadhi in order to obtain disgust-abandon with respect to the first emptiness (=the first sunyatasamadhi).”

The orthodox Vaiś̄kṣaika position is that these are realized at moment of the Knowledge of Destruction.

4 Cultivations of Samadhi [K27-28]: The Sutras teach a fourfold cultivation of samadhi:
1. which has [worldly] happiness for its result (the 4 dhyanas)
2. which has the vision of supernormal knowledge (abhijñā) divine sight for its result
3. which has the attainment of excellent prajña (comprehension) for its result
4. which has the cessation of the defilements for its result (diamond-like samadhi (vajropamasamadhi) of the 4th dhyana)
4 Immeasurables (apramānas) (Brahma-viharas, “divine abodes”): “They are called the Immeasurables because they apply to an immeasurable number of beings, drawing after them an immeasurable merit, & producing immeasurable results.” [K29-31]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immeasurable (無量):</th>
<th>Opposes:</th>
<th>Nature (the nature of ___ is):</th>
<th>Aspect (akara) (cultivation):</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. maitri (friendship, good-will, loving kindness) [慈]</td>
<td>vyapada (ill-will)</td>
<td>advesa (absence of malice or hatred [D30])</td>
<td>sukha (happiness): “Beings are happy!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. karuna (compassion, sympathy) [悲]</td>
<td>vihimsa (harm)</td>
<td>advesa (absence of malice or hatred [D30])</td>
<td>duhkha (unhappiness): “Beings are unhappy!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. mudita (sympathetic joy) [喜]</td>
<td>arati (dissatisfaction)</td>
<td>saumanasya (satisfaction)</td>
<td>modantam (joy): “Beings are joyful!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. upeka (equanimity) [捨]</td>
<td>sensual kamaraga (sensual craving) &amp; vyapada (hostility)</td>
<td>alohha (absence of desire [D29]) &amp; [absence of ill-will.]</td>
<td>sattva (beings): “Beings!”</td>
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</table>

With the exception of joy (only in the first two dhyanas), they are cultivated in anagamya, dhyanatara, and the 4 dhyanas. Some say they can be cultivated in Kamadhatu and in the samantakas. In this system, defilements are not abandoned through the Immeasurables: “For the Immeasurables have the basic Dhyanas for their sphere or places of their arising; because they include an arbitrary or voluntary (adhimukti-, ii.72) judgment and not an exact judgment; and because they have for their object living beings and not the general characteristics of things (dharmasamanyalaksanas, ii.72).”

**Cultivation of the Immeasurables:** “How does the beginner cultivate goodwill? He calls to mind the happiness that he himself has experienced; he hears one speak of the happiness experienced by others, by the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, the Sravakas, and the Pratyekabuddhas. He forms the vow that all beings shall obtain this happiness. When his defilements are too strong, the ascetic is not capable of carrying out his intention impartially: he should then divide all beings into three categories, friends, persons to whom he is indifferent, and enemies. The first category is also divided into three: good friends, medium friends, and lesser friends; and in the same way the third (=enemies). The category of persons to whom he is indifferent is not so subdivided: thus there are altogether seven groups. Having made this division, the ascetic first forms the vow of happiness with regard to his good friends; he then follows this with a vow of happiness with regard to the medium friends and lesser friends. Finally the ascetic no longer distinguishes the three categories of friends; he then forms the same vow with regard to persons to whom he is indifferent and with regard to his enemies. Through the force of all these, he produces, with regard to his greatest enemies, the same vow of happiness as with regards his dearest friends. When this meditation or cultivation of the vow of happiness, sevenfold and impartial, is achieved, the ascetic then progressively enlarges the domain of this vow, embracing his town, his country, one cardinal direction, and then all the universe. When all beings, without exception, are embraced in his infinite mind of goodwill, the meditation of goodwill is achieved.” (similarly for the others)

**Vimoksas [K32-34], Abhībhavayatanas [K35], Krtsnayatanas [K36-37]:** “The 8 Dominant Ayatanas (abhībhavayatanas) have the 8 Deliverances (vimoksas) for their ‘entry’ and the 10 All-Encompassing Ayatanas (krtsnayatanas) have the 8 Dominant Ayatanas for their entry: the following are superior to the preceding ones.” Through the Deliverances (liberations), one is only ‘delivered’ [temporarily], but through the Dominant Ayatanas, one attains domination of their object [one transcends or overcomes the object]. Through the All-encompassing Ayatanas (spheres of totalization), one embraces the objects in its totality & exclusively [based on visible blue, in dhyanas, a pure, subtle “blue” (rupa as pure form)]. Ayatana = base, sphere, entrance, abode (unique cognitive species).

**Vimoksas [勝處] Deliverances**

1. One endowed with physical matter sees physical matter Meditations on loathsome things (see Ch VI, K9) 
2. With no idea of internal visible things, sees external visible things Decay of one’s body (1.) & others’ (2.), 1st & 2nd dhyanas.
3. Bringing forth agreeable Deliverance, dwells in absorption Only cultivated in the 4th dhyana. It is absence of desire.
4. 1st Arupya: Akasamantayatana The 4th – 7th Deliverances are the good Arupyas – they are either pure or undefiled. [Some say the 8 Deliverances are called deliverances because they deliver one from the obstacles to absorption.]
5. 2nd Arupya: Vijnanamantayatana
6. 3rd Arupya: Akimcanyatana
7. 4th Arupya: Naivasamjna-nasamjnyatana
8. Absorption of cessation of ideas & sensations (nirodhasamapatti) Deliverance because it turns away from ideas & sensations

**Vimoksas [勝處] Predominant ayatanas**

1. With an idea of internal physical matter, seeing of a small amount of external physical matter Similar to the 1st deliverance
2. With an idea of internal physical matter, seeing of an unlimited amount of external physical matter Similar to the 2nd deliverance
3. With no idea of internal physical matter, but seeing of a small amount of external physical matter
4. With no idea of internal physical matter, but seeing of a large amount of external physical matter
5. There is an absence of any idea of physical matter, but there is the seeing of external blue. Similar to the 3rd deliverance
6. There is an absence of any idea of physical matter, but there is the seeing of external yellow.
7. There is an absence of any idea of physical matter, but there is the seeing of external red.
8. There is an absence of any idea of physical matter, but there is the seeing of external white.

**Abhībhavayatanas [遍處] Dominant ayatanas**

1. The totality of earth Realized in the 4th dhyana. They are absence of desire. They refer to the visible things (rupayatana) of Kamadhatu.
2. The totality of water [Kṛṣna = Kasina in Pali, Majhihama Nikaya 77: “One contemplates the earth kasina above, below, and across, undivided and immeasurable.”]
3. The totality of fire
4. The totality of wind
5. The totality of blue
6. The totality of yellow
7. The totality of red
8. The totality of white
9. The uninterrupted (anantya) ayatana of space Pure absorptions of Arupyadhatu. Their objects are the 4 skandhas of the sphere to which they belong (the 1st and 2nd Arupyas).