

Abhidharmakosa Study Materials

Introductory

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Abhidharma Historical Overview

The teachings given by Shakyamuni Buddha appear to have still been in a process of collection and elaboration when different sects and schools started to form. In the midst of this process, Abhidharma teachings started to develop. Once the discourse collections were established, Abhidharma became the primary medium through which the teachings of Buddhism developed for hundreds of years. The main schools of Mahayana Buddhism in India were both a reaction to (Madhyamaka), and a continued development of (Yogacara), Abhidharma teachings (particularly the Abhidharma teachings of the Sarvastivada and other schools of Buddhism in North India).

Forces driving the Abhidharma approach:

- developing an authoritative formulation of teachings (to prevent schism and dispute)
- formulating a self-consistent interpretation (from the conflicting & variant teachings amassed in the Sutras)
- consolidating the unwieldy Sutra & Abhidharma literature into manageable summaries (easier to learn, transmit, teach)
- working out unresolved, unanswered & unanticipated questions and problems (filling the doctrinal void)
- developing a comprehensive approach to doctrine (towards a unified, coherent, all-encompassing system)
- incorporating new insights & discoveries spinning off from the Abhidharma approach itself and from meditation
- encyclopedic tendency to gather all perspectives, approaches, controversies, etc.
- staying current with Indian religious developments (increasing scholasticism tested in public debate)
- resolving disputes as variant resolutions to the above forces led to divergent positions within Buddhism
- and at a micro-level: collecting, classifying, elucidating, elaborating, abstracting, unifying, explaining, etc.

Origins of the Abhidharma approach: the Samyutta Nikaya (Pali)/Samyukta Agama (Sanskrit) in particular organizes the discourses in terms of doctrinal categories. Many of the categories developed in this collection would continue as fundamental organizing principles in Abhidharma explications. Also, discourses such as the Samgiti Sutta (DN 33) and the Dasuttara Sutta (DN 34), are seen as proto-Abhidharma in their attempts at a comprehensive and organized collection of all the significant teachings of the Buddha.

Meaning of Abhidharma: Abhi has two basic meanings: firstly, “higher”, “supreme”, “excellent” (this meaning is favored in the Theravadin tradition), and secondly, “facing”, “envisaging”, “regarding” (this meaning is favored in the North Indian tradition including the Sarvastivada). Dharma in this context usually refers to the teachings or doctrine, but can also refer to truth, law, precept, nirvana, and in terms of “dharma theory”, a truly real event or force. Abhidharma appears infrequently in the discourses. In one instance, it appears to refer to a one-on-one conversation or debate on a point of doctrine. The early appearances of the term Abhidharma are sometimes paired with Abhivinaya. See Abhidharmakosa Chapter 1 karika 2 for Vasubandhu’s definition of Abhidharma.

Three broad phases in the development of Abhidharma literature: (covers a wide range of development)

I. Mainly involves sutra commentary and arrangement of sutra quotations according to a set of categories (texts including Sarvastivada *Sangiti-Paryaya* & *Dharma-Skandha* & Theravada *Vibhanga* & *Puggala-Pannatti*). The collection of teachings enumerated in the Samgiti Sutta were somewhat indiscriminate collections of teaching lists arranged numerically – that is, a wide variety of teachings were combined and organized superficially based on the number of terms in each list. This was an important aid to memorization but not conducive to substantive explication of doctrine.

II. A more abstract approach develops which incorporates new categories (texts here include the remaining Sarvastivada and Theravada canonical texts). Lists of terms drawn from the sutras are formed and combined with each other through various modes of analysis. There were two basic kinds of lists: first a list of *dharma*s classifying phenomena (skandhas, ayatanas, dhatus, etc), and second, a list of attributes usually formulated in dyads and triads and sometimes quads (samskrta/asamskrta, kusala/akusala/avyakrta, etc). Also, especially in the Sarvastivada *Vijnanakaya* and the Theravada *Katthavatthu*, there is extensive presentation of divergent views. Polemic stances impel the development of new interpretive approaches and techniques of refutation. These texts were compiled ~4th – 1st c. B.C.E.

III. Development of commentaries on canonical Abhidharma texts and the development of summary digest or exegetical manuals (sometimes in reaction to the excesses of the commentaries). The approach becomes increasingly systematic aiming at a comprehensive and coherent formulation encapsulating the entire teaching. In the Theravada, this includes the *Athasalini* (commentary on the *Dhamma-Sangani*), *Visuddhimagga* and the *Abhidhammatta-Sangaha*. In the Sarvastivada, this includes the *Maha-Vibhasa* (a massive compilation of teachings structured as a commentary on the *Jnana-Prasthanana*), *Abhidharmahrdaya* texts, *Abhidharmakosabhasyam*, and commentaries on the Kosa. In this stage, the sutra teachings are viewed as needing definitive interpretation, which only the Abhidharma texts can provide.

Of the early schools (there were over 20), only the Abhidharma literatures of the Theravadins and the Sarvastivadins have been preserved. Only the Theravadins preserved a complete discourse literature. Isolated Agamas of multiple schools survive in Chinese translation and some Sanskrit fragments. The two Abhidharma traditions appear to have some common roots but developed quite differently with geographic separation. There is one further major Abhidharma text that has been preserved in Chinese translation which is neither Theravada nor Sarvastivada: the Sariputrabhidharma (believed by some scholars to be Dharmagupta). The Sarvastivada usually attribute authors to their canonical Abhidharma texts.

North India – Sarvastivada

In Sanskrit (mostly preserved in Chinese translation).
Four-part Canon: Agama, Abhidharma, Vinaya & Ksudraka.
Discourses consist of 4 Agama (transmissions)

Phases I & II:

Abhidharma-pitaka: Seven texts:

1. *Sangiti-Paryaya* – “Discourse on the Sangiti” (Sariputra, Maha-Maudgalyayana) (T1536)
 2. *Dharma-Skandha* – “Aggregation of Factors” (Mahakausthila, Sariputra) (T1537)
 3. *Prajnapiti-Sastra* – “Treatise on Designations” (Maha-Maudgalyayana, Mahakatyayana) (T1538)
 4. *Vijnanakaya* – “Collection on Consciousness” (Devasraman) (T1539)
 5. *Dhatukaya* *– “Collection on the Elements” (Purna, Vasumitra) (T1540)
 6. *Prakaranapada* – “Exposition” (Vasumitra) (T1541, T1542)
 7. *Jnana-Prasthanana* – “Foundations of Knowledge” (Katyayaniputra) (T1543, T1544) (1st c. BCE?)
- (7. *Jnana-prasthanana* is regarded by the Vaibhasikas as the primary text, “the body”, and the other six as its “feet” (pada).)
(Where there are two authorship ascriptions above: the first is from the Sanskrit & Tibetan tradition, the second from the Chinese)

* = part or all of the text has been translated into English – see below. T# = Taisho Number. The Sarvastivada texts above were translated by Xuanzang (& his team) except for: T1538: Fa-hu & Wei-chung (incomplete, the Tibetan canon also contains a partial translation, complete text has not been found); T1541: Gunabhadra & Bodhiyasas; T1543: Sanghadeva, Chu Fo-nien & Dharmapriya

Note: the Abhidharma-pitakas of the Sarvastivada and the Theravada both contain seven texts but they are quite different. Lines connect texts from the two collections that appear to trace back to a common root text/material. Frauwallner also notes a potential connection between chapter 6 of the *Prakaranapada* and chapters 3 & 4 of the *Dhamma-Sangani*.

Phase III Sarvastivada post-canonical:

Mahavibhassa – “The Great Commentary” (T1545)(2nd c. CE, a massive compendium)
Abhidharmamrta-rasa – “Essence of Abhidharma” by Ghosaka (T1553)
Abhidharma-hrdaya *– “Heart of Abhidharma” by Dharmasri (T1550) (1st-2nd c. CE)
Abhidharma-hrdaya-sastra – “Heart of Abhidharma Treatise” by Upasanta (T1551)
Samyuktābhidharma-hrdaya *– “Heart of Abhidharma with Miscellaneous Additions” (AKA *Abhidharmahrdayavyakhya*) by Dharmatrata (4th c CE) (T1552)
[these last three texts are from Gandhara – where Vasubandhu was brought up]
Abhidharmakosa-bhasyam *– “Treasury of Abhidharma (& Commentary)” by Vasubandhu (5th c) (T1558 (Xuanzang translation), T1559 (Paramartha translation, T1560 Karika only (Xuanzang translation)) (5th c. CE)
Nyayanusara – “In Accordance with the Truth” by Samghabhadra (5th c) (a commentary on the Kosa defending the Vaibhasika positions the Kosa refutes) (T1562) (5th c. CE)
Abhidharmavatara *– “Entry into Abhidharma” by Skandhila (T1554) (5th c. CE)
Abhidharma-dipa – “Lamp of Abhidharma” (anonymous) (another commentary on the Kosa defending the orthodox Vaibhasika position)
Tattvartha-tika - by Sthiramati (Vasubandhu’s disciple)(6th c. CE) (T1561)
Abhidharmakosa-vyakhya – “Commentary on the Abhidharmakosa” by Yasomitra (AKA Sphutartha Commentary) (the only commentary that survives in Sanskrit)(6th c. CE?)
Many significant commentaries further composed in India, China, Tibet and Japan.

To some extent, the *Abhidharmakosa* and its commentaries come at the end of the “Abhidharma period”. In the 6th c., Indian Buddhism took a strong turn away from many of the tendencies of the Abhidharma approach and towards logic and epistemology in the work of Dignaga and Dharmakirti.

In China, Abhidharma studies were active from the first translation of Sarvastivadin Abhidharma texts ~380-400 CE. Xuanzang’s translation of the *Abhidharmakosa* completed in 654 rejuvenated Abhidharma studies (and supplanted Paramartha’s translation of the Kosa made in 564) which from that point on were primarily occupied with composing commentaries on the Kosa. Abhidharma studies declined in China in 10th and 11th c. Most Abhidharma activity in China, Japan and Tibet consists of commentaries on the Kosa. The Kosa basically became synonymous with Abhidharma for the later Buddhist tradition.

South India & Sri Lanka – Theravada

In Pali.
Three-part Canon: Nikaya, Abhidhamma, Vinaya
Discourses consist of 5 Nikaya (collections)

Phases I & II:

Abhidhamma-pitaka: Seven texts:

1. *Dhamma-Sangani* *– “Enumeration of Factors”
2. *Vibhanga* *– “Analysis”
3. *Dhatukatha* *– “Discussion of Elements”
4. *Puggala-Pannatti* *– “Designation of Persons”
5. *Katha-Vatthu* *– “Points of Discussion” (compiled by Moggaliputta Tissa)(3rd-2nd c. BCE)
6. *Yamaka* – “Pairs”
7. *Patthana* *– “Foundational Conditions” (of these, 1. *Dhamma-Sangani* & 7. *Patthana* are usually regarded as the most important) (Theravada holds that Shakyamuni taught the Abhidharma to his mother Queen Maya and other Devas in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and then repeated these teachings to Shariputra.)

Phase III Theravada post-canonical:

Athasalini *– “The Expositor” (very important commentary on the *Dhamma-Sangani* – attributed spuriously to Buddhaghosa)
Vimuttimaggā *– “The Path of Freedom” by Upatissa
Visuddhimaggā *– “The Path of Purification” by Buddhaghosa (5th c.)
Abhidhammatta-Sangaha *– “Compendium of Abhidhamma” by Anuruddha (10th-11th c)

Abhidharma Bibliography (with some annotations)

Texts in Translation

[There is a great deal of material here. The most helpful single publication for studying the Abhidharmakosa (besides the Kosa itself of course) I found to be Dhammajoti's Sarvastivada Abhidharma. Other very helpful publications include: Sarvastivada Buddhist Scholasticism by Willemen, Dessein & Cox, Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems by Frauwallner, The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word Dharma by Stcherbatsky and "From Category To Ontology: The Changing Role Of Dharma In Sarvastivada Abhidharma" by Cox.]

Sarvastivada Canonical Abhidharma Texts

Dhatukaya by Purna/Vasumitra: Treatise on Groups of Elements, trans Swati Ganguly, 1994.

Sarvastivada Post-canonical Abhidharma Texts

Abhidharma-hrdaya by Dharmasri: The Essence of Scholasticism, trans Charles Willemen, 2006.

Samyuktābhidharma-hrdaya by Dharmatrata: Samyuktābhidharmahrdaya: Heart of Scholasticism with Miscellaneous Additions, trans Bart Dessein, 1999.

Abhidharmavatara by Skandhila: Entrance into the Supreme Doctrine trans by Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti, 2008.

Contemporary Sarvastivada and General Abhidharma Studies

"A Map of Consciousness, the 75 Dharmas of the Sarvastivadins," S. Bevan, Gesar, Fall, 1977

"Attainment through Abandonment: The Sarvastivadin Path of Removing Defilements" by Collett Cox in Paths to Liberation: The Marga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought, ed. Robert Buswell & Robert Gimello, 1992.

"Dharma and Abhidharma" by Johannes Bronkhorst in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 48 (1985)

"From Category To Ontology: The Changing Role Of Dharma In Sarvastivada Abhidharma", by Collett Cox, Journal of Indian Philosophy 32, 5-6. (2004): 543-597.

"On the Abhidharma Ontology," Paul Williams, Journal of Indian Philosophy 9 (1981): 227-257.

"The Abhidharma Literature of the Sarvastivadins," J. Takakusu, JPTS, vol. 57, 1905, pp. 67-146.

A History of Indian Buddhism, Akira Hirakawa (Paul Groner trans), 1990.

A Study Of The "Abhidharmahrdaya": The Historical Development Of The Concept Of Karma In The Sarvastivada Thought (Buddhism, India) by Ryose, Wataru S. Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1987.

Abhidharma Doctrines and Controversies on Perception, by Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti, 2007.

Buddhism: Abhidharma and Madhyamaka (Critical Concepts in Religious Studies. Edited by Paul Williams, 2005.

Buddhist Thought in India, Edward Conze, 1962.

Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies by Padmanabh S Jaini, 2001. (includes his articles: "The Development of the Theory of the Viprayukta-Samskaras", "The Sautrantika Theory of Bija", "The Vaibhasika Theory of Words and Meanings," and his introduction to the *Abhidhadma-dipa* (a critical commentary of the Kosa))

Encyclopedia of Buddhism, ed, Robert Buswell, 2004, entries for Abhidharma, Abhidharmakosabhasya, Dharma and Dharmas, Sarvastivada and Mulasarvastivada, Sautrantika, Vasubandhu.

Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, ed Karl Potter, Volumes VII, VIII & IX (covering Buddhist Philosophy to 600 CE). (Includes many entries on Abhidharma texts (including the Kosa & related texts) and relevant introductory essays.)

Nagarjuna's "Seventy Stanzas", David Komito, Snow Lion Publications, 1987 (overview of Buddhist psychology in intro).

Sarvastivada Abhidharma, by Bhikkhu KL Dhammajoti, 2009. (An excellent and ground-breaking treatment of Sarvastivada Abhidharma doctrine. I found this the most helpful in studying *Abhidharmakosa* (especially Ch II, IV, V, VI & VII).) Not currently available from Amazon, etc., ordering information can be found here:

<http://ibc.ac.th/en/dhammajoti/sarvastivada>

Sarvastivada Buddhist Scholasticism by Charles Willemen, Bart Dessein & Collett Cox, 1998. (Good scholarly overview of Sarvastivada history, doctrine and texts.)

Sarvastivada Literature by Anukul Chandra Banerjee, Calcutta, 1957.

Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems by Erich Frauwallner, 1995. (A very good overview of Abhidharma literature in general, with some illuminating analysis of Sarvastivada teachings (including *Abhidharmakosa*) but a bit disparaging of Theravada Abhidharma texts.)

Systems of Buddhist Thought, S. Yamakami, University of Calcutta, 1912. Online at:

<http://www.archive.org/details/buddhisticthough00yamauoft>

The Buddhist Doctrine of Momentariness. A Survey of the Origins and Early Phase of this Doctrine up to Vasubandhu. Alexander von Rospatt. 1995.

The development of prajna in Buddhism from early Buddhism to the Prajnaparamita system: With special reference to the Sarvastivada tradition by Qing, Fa Ph.D., University of Calgary (Canada), 2001.

The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy, J. Takakusu, 1947, pp. 55-73. ("The Kusha School")

The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy, Lama Govinda, 1937.

The Sarvastivada And Its Tradition by Sanghsen Singh, 1994.

Abhidharmakosa Editions & Translations

阿毘達磨俱舍論 (A-p'i-ta-mo chu-she-lun: Abhidharmakosabhāsyam) trans 玄奘 (Xuanzang), 654. Taisho 1558. Just the karika is T1560. (Xuanzang had a very solid understanding of Abhidharma. His translations are highly regarded.

However, they do include many inserted clarifications, which while often being quite correct, are not in the original.)

Online at: <http://www.cbeta.org/result/T29/T29n1558.htm>

Tibetan edition of Abhidharmakosa and Bhāsyam: <http://www.aciprelease.org/r6web/webdata/engsubhtml/sub13.html>

L'Abhidharmakosa de Vasubandhu, French trans. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, 1923 (Poussin's scholarship is very highly regarded. He made this translation before the Sanskrit was discovered. It is based on Xuanzang's Chinese translation and the Tibetan. Like Xuanzang, he seems at times to have taken some liberties in his translation to help the reader.) All but Vol 3 (of 6) are online at: <http://www.archive.org/details/labhidharmakosat01vasuoft>

Abhidharmakosabhāsyam Sanskrit edition ed. Pradhan, 1967. (The Sanskrit was discovered ~1933 in Tibet). Just the karika (in roman and devanagari script):

<http://www.uwest.edu/sanskritcanon/dp/index.php?q=node%2F35&textID=37a30101838563cdde7>

Complete text in Sanskrit & 2 Chinese translations (Paramartha & Xuanzang): <http://www.mlcd.cn/sanskritweb/etext.htm>

(These pages appeared a bit mangled in Firefox, but looked fine in Chrome & Internet Explorer, 4/23/10)

Abhidharma Kosa Bhāsyam, Eng trans. Leo M. Pruden, 1991. (See below: Errors and Problems in the Pruden Translation.)

The Abhidharmakosabhāsyam, Ācārya Vasubandhu's Autocommentary to His Treasury of Higher Learning, Translated from the Sanskrit by Artemus B Engle. Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions [Unpublished microfilm]. (I have seen references to this but have not been able to access it.)

Abhidharmakosa Karika Study, compiled by Korin, 2010. (Includes the Sanskrit, Chinese and English translations of the karika with excerpts and summaries of the Bhāsyam content. Prepared as a study resource and as a companion to these Study Materials for those who do not have access to a published edition of the Abhidharmakosa.)

Abhidharmakosa Chapter I:

Vasubandhu On "Aggregates, Spheres, And Components": Being Chapter One Of The "Abhidharmakosa" by Hall, Bruce Cameron Ph.D., Harvard University, 1983. (Good translation of Ch I from the Sanskrit with some helpful footnotes) (the Karika Study includes Hall's translation of the Karika from Ch I.)

"Abhidharmakosakarika," by N. Aiyaswami Sastri, Indian Historical Quarterly, IHQ 29 (1953). 29.2, pp. 111-120 and 29.3, pp. 242-259 (A translation of just the karika (included in the Karika Study) with notes from Yasomitra's commentary.)

"Abhidharmakosa" at <http://abhidharmakosa.blogspot.com/> by Namdrol Malcolm Smith. (Translation from the Tibetan, karika 1-29, with audio commentary podcasts, which may not be online anymore)

Abhidharmakosa Chapters I & II:

The Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu trans Subhadra Jha, 1983. (Translation of both the Sanskrit and Poussin's French of just chapters I & II. Valuable piece of scholarship. The translation from the Sanskrit of the karika of Ch II is included in the Karika Study)

[Chapters I & II include an overview of the *dharma*s. Also see:]

Gateway to Knowledge by Mipham Rinpoche Vol I, trans Erik Pema Kunsang, 1997

Meditation on Emptiness, Jeffrey Hopkins, 1983. (pp. 213-274 for a variant exposition of the *dharma*s)

Abhidharmakosa Chapter Ch II:

Disputed Dharmas: Early Buddhist Theories of Existence, by Collett Cox, 1995. (Includes a study and translation of Sanghabhadra's assault (from the *Nyāyanusāra*) on Vasubandhu's refutations of the Viprayukta-samskaras in Ch II) There are a number of studies of the Yogacara exposition of the mental states (51 *caita*). See below: Abhidharmasamuccaya, Shastra on the Door to Understanding the Hundred Dharmas, Buddhist Psychology, Meditation on Emptiness, Mind in Buddhist Psychology, and The Mind and its Functions. Also see Theravada studies of the mental states (*cetasika*): Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha, Abhidhamma Studies, Cetasika, and Unlimiting Mind.

Abhidharmakosa Chapter Ch III:

A Study of Dependent Origination: Vasubandhu, Buddhaghosa, and the Interpretation of "Pratītyasamutpāra" Stalker, Susan Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1987. (Includes translation and discussion of the section on Dependent Co-arising K20-38, from the Sanskrit (included in the Karika Study))

Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins, Akira Sadakata, 1997.

Dharma Essentials Course 8: Death and the Realms of Existence, Geshe Michael Roach (Asian Classics Institute – an approach from Tibetan Buddhism), 4 talks with written materials: <http://www.acidharma.org/aci/online/onlineDE.html>.

Formal Study Course: 11 classes with extensive supplemental written materials (includes translation of isolated karika (which are included in the Karika Study)): <http://www.acidharma.org/aci/online/course8.html>

Also of interest: Myriad Worlds: Buddhist Cosmology in Abhidharma, Kalacakra, and Dzog-Chen by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye, 1995.

Overview of Theravada cosmology: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/ptf/dhamma/sagga/loka.html>

Abhidharmakosa Chapter IV:

Karman in Indian philosophy and Vasubandhu's Exposition by Sako, Toshio Ph.D., Columbia University, 1996. (Includes a translation of the first section of chapter IV (K1-12) from Sanskrit with a subcommentary by Sthiramati. The translation of the karika is included in the Karika Study.)

Excerpts from Illumination of the Path to Freedom, being an Explanation of the Holy Treasure House of Higher Knowledge First Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gendun Drup: http://aciprelease.org/r6web/webdata/selected_texts_english/S05525_part_E.pdf
Dharma Essentials Course 5: How Karma Works, Geshe Michael Roach (Asian Classics Institute – an approach from Tibetan Buddhism), 4 talks: <http://www.acidharma.org/aci/online/onlineDE.html>. Formal Study Course: 11 classes with supplemental written materials (includes translation of isolated karika (which are included in the Karika Study)): <http://www.acidharma.org/aci/online/course5.html>

Karma-siddhi-prakarana is another (probably later) exposition of karma by Vasubandhu. See translations below: Karmasiddhi Prakarana: Lamotte/Pruden, & Seven Works of Vasubandhu: Anacker.

Vasubandhu On The "Avijnapti-Rupa": A Study In Fifth-Century Abhidharma Buddhism By Dowling, Thomas Lee Ph.D., Columbia University, 1976. (Includes translation of karika & bhasya of K1-22 from Sanskrit (included in the Karika Study))

Abhidharmakosa Chapter VI: Of interest (no direct commentary):

Paths to Liberation: The Marga and its Transformation in Buddhist Thought, edited by Robert Buswell & Robert Gimello, 1992.

Abhidharmakosa Chapter VIII: Of interest (no direct commentary):

Practicing the Jhanas: Traditional Concentration Meditation as Presented by the Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw, Stephen Snyder, 2009

The Experience of Samadhi: An In-depth Exploration of Buddhist Meditation, Richard Shankman, 2008.

Samadhi: The Numinous and Cessative in Indo-Tibetan Yoga, Stuart Ray Sarbacker, 2005.

Who Is My Self? A Guide to Buddhist Meditation, Ayya Khema, 1997.

Abhidharmakosa Chapter IX:

Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons, Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of Self", trans & study by James Duerlinger, 2003. (Translation of Ch IX from the Sanskrit, with extensive commentary.)

Reason's Traces: Identity and Interpretation in Indian & Tibetan Buddhist Thought, Matthew Kapstein, 2001 (Translation of Ch IX: pp.347-375, from the Sanskrit)

Soul Theory of the Buddhists, trans Th Stcherbatsky, 1920. (Translation of Ch. IX from the Tibetan)

(Also of interest: The Literature of the Personalists of Early Buddhism, Bhikkhu Thich Thien Chau, 1996.)

Abhidharmakosa – Commentary, Analysis, Etc.

"Elucidating the Path to Liberation": A study of the commentary on the "Abhidharmakosa" by the first Dalai Lama by Patt, David Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 1993. (Includes translation of the First Dalai Lama's commentary on Ch I-V of the *Abhidharmakosa*. Good introduction also. I checked with the author and he had not undertaken the translation of the last three chapters.)

"On Being Mindless: The debate on the reemergence of consciousness from the attainment of cessation in the *Abhidharmakosabhasyam* and its commentaries" by Paul Griffiths, *Philosophy East and West* (October 1983). Online at: <http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-PHIL/griffi3.htm>

Abhidharmakosa (A Study with a New Perspective), by Lata Bapat, 1994. (Not recommended)

Analytical Study of the Abhidharmakosa, by Sukomal Chaudhury, 1976. (Comprehensive overview of the contents but does not go deep into the teachings in terms of their significance or their extensive interrelationships as a system.)

Chapter summaries and a few excerpts from Geshe Jampa Gyatso's commentary on Vasubandhu's "Treasury of Manifest Dharma" (*Abhidharmakosa*): http://www.iltk.it/mp/en/L3_S3_3_3_treasury.htm. Link for the upcoming FPMT course on *Abhidharmakosa* in 2011: <http://www.iltk.it/mp/en/on-line/index.html>. At some point, an *Abhidharmakosa* homestudy CD may be available at: http://www.fpmt.org/shop/category.aspx?SID=1&Category_ID=30&

Dhagpo Kagyu Library overview of the *Abhidharmakosa*: <http://www.bibliotheque-dhagpo-kagyu.org/en/doss/abhi2.php>
Early Buddhist Philosophy by Verdu, Alfonso, 1985

Frogs in the Custard: An Exploration of the View and Practice of Abhidharma, Steven Goodman, 2010? (forthcoming, based on the *Abhidharmakosa*). A set of lectures (30 hours) with the same author and title is available for purchase here: <http://zamamerica.stores.yahoo.net/frincuexofvi.html>

Index to the Abhidharmakosabhasya, A. Hirakawa, 1973. (The introduction is very good.)

Indian Buddhism, A Survey with Bibliographical Notes, by Hajime Nakamura, 1980, pp 104-112 and see index.

On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem, Paul Griffiths, 1991.

Philosophy and Psychology of the Abhidharma, H. Guenther, 1957. (references to Yasomitra's commentary on the *Kosa*)

Some Psychological Aspects of Early Buddhist Philosophy based on Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu by Aruna Haldar
Summary of the Abhidharmadipa, Padmanabh Jaini (Undated photocopy in Tassajara library, 142 pages, w/ related articles).

The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word Dharma, by Th Stcherbatsky, 1923 (Makes a number of excellent points in its analysis of *dharma*s using the *Abhidharmakosa* as its basic source text.)

The role of intention in perception according to Vasubandhu's "Abhidharmakosabhasya": The background to Buddhist soteriology by Steenburg, David John Frederick M.A., The University of Manitoba (Canada), 1987.

The Universe in a Single Atom, H.H. the Dalai Lama, 2005 (pg 55 & 80 mention the atomic theory & cosmology of AKB Ch. 3 and state that these presentations should be “modified” in light of modern scientific discoveries & understanding.)
Vasubandhu's Parinama Theory, Fujimoto, Akira M.A., University of Calgary (Canada), 1993.

Abhidharmakosa and Yogacara:

Abhidharma Samuccaya: The Compendium of Higher Teaching (Philosophy), by Asanga, French trans by Walpola Rahula, English trans by Sara Boin-Webb, 2001. (This Yogacara Abhidharma text is much studied in Tibetan Buddhism. Major portions of it can be viewed as a Yogacara adaptation of Sarvastivadin Abhidharma and the *Abhidharmakosa*.)

Buddhist Phenomenology: (Yogacara Buddhism and the *Ch'eng Wei-shih lun*) by Dan Lusthaus, 2002.

Shastra on the Door to Understanding the Hundred Dharmas, trans by BTTS, commentary by Hsuan Hua, 1983.

The Sautrantika theory of seeds (bija) revisited: With special reference to the ideological continuity between Vasubandhu's theory of seeds and its Srilata/Darstantika precedents by Park, Changhwan Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 2007. (Along with Dhammajoti, this work refutes Kritzer's position by finding Darstantika precedents for the Sautrantika views expressed in the *Abhidharmakosa*.)

The Yogacara Dharma List : A Study Of The Abhidharmasamuccaya And Its Commentary, Abhidharmasamuccayabhasya by Oliver, Curtis Forrest Ph.D., University of Toronto (Canada), 1982. (Includes some discussion as well of the 75-dharma list attributed to the *Abhidharmakosa*.)

Vasubandhu and the Yogacarabhumi: Yogacara Elements in the Abhidharmakosabhasya, by Robert Kritzer, 2005 (Argues that Vasubandhu draws what he calls “Sautrantika” positions from the seminal Yogacara compilation, the *Yogacarabhumi*. Lays out all the positions in the *Abhidharmakosa* Samghabhadra identifies as Sautrantika.)

Vijnaptimatratna and the Abhidharma context of early Yogacara, by Richard King, Asian Philosophy Vol. 8 No. 1 Mar.1998. Online at: <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-ADM/richard.htm> (Argues well for continuity between the *Abhidharmakosa* later Yogacara developments.)

Vasubandhu

“A Study of Paramartha's Life of Vasubandhu; and the Date of Vasubandhu,” J. Takakusu, JRAS, London, 1905, pp. 33-53.
A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience, Thomas Kochmutton, 1982.

Indian Buddhist Pundits from “The Jewel Garland of Buddhist History” trans Lobsang Tsonawa, 1985, pp. 33-36.

Karmasiddhi Prakarana: The Treatise on Action by Vasubandhu, Etienne Lamotte, English translation by Leo Pruden, Asian Humanities Press, 1988. (This work can be seen as Vasubandhu's response to some of the Vaibhasika criticisms of the seed theory. It is notable as a development of the theories put forth in the *Abhidharmakosa* with the addition of introducing Alaya-vijnana (quoting the Mahayana *Samdhinirmocana* Sutra).)

Seven Works of Vasubandhu, Stefan Anacker, Motilal Banarsidass, 1984. (Works by Vasubandhu particularly relevant to Kosa study are the *Pancaskandha-Prakarana*, *Karmasiddhi-prakarana*, *Vimsatika-karika* & *Trimsika-karika*, the first two as transitional works between the Vasubandhu the Sarvastivadin/Sautrantika and Vasubandhu the Yogacarin. The latter two full-blown Yogacara works also show Vasubandhu attending to themes or points that he also brings up in *Abhidharmakosa*. The introduction includes a nice piece on Vasubandhu's life.)

The Inner Science of Buddhist Practice (Pancaskandha-Prakarana & commentary by Sthiramati), trans Artemus Engle, 2009. In the Zen tradition, Vasubandhu is recognized as the 21st ancestor of the Zen lineage in India. See Cases 22 & 23 in the Denkoroku: The Record of Transmitting the Light trans Francis Cook, 1991 and Transmission of Light, trans Thomas Cleary, 1990. Also, see Vasubandhu's entry in the Dentoroku: The Transmission of the Lamp: Early Masters, trans Sohaku Ogata, 1990, pp. 38-42. Vasubandhu is the 4th of the 9 doshi bows during the morning ritual of reciting the names of the Buddhas and ancestors. Dogen quotes the *Abhidharmakosa* and the *Mahavibhasa* a few times in *Shobogenzo*.

Theravada Canonical Abhidharma Texts:

Dhammasangani: Buddhist Psychological Ethics, trans C.A.F. Rhys Davids (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1900).

Vibhanga: The Book of Analysis, trans Ven. U Thittila (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1969).

Dhatukatha: Discourse on Elements, trans Ven. U Narada (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1962).

Puggalapaññatti: A Designation of Human Types, trans B.C. Law (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1922).

Kathavatthu: Points of Controversy, trans S.Z. Aung and C.A.F. Rhys Davids (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1915).

Patthana: Conditional Relations (vol I & II), trans [partial] Ven. U Narada (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1969 & 1981).

Theravada Post-canonical Abhidhamma Texts:

Abhidhammattha-Samgaha by Anuruddha, trans S.Z. Aung, Compendium of Philosophy, 1967, P.T.S. and trans Narada. A Manual of Abhidhamma, 1968, and Bhikkhu Bodhi general editor, Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma 1993. Also see: <http://abhidhamonline.org/SANGAHA.htm>

Attasalini (*Dhammasangani* commentary) attributed to Buddhaghosa, trans. P.M. Tin, The Expositor, 1920, 2 vols., P.T.S.

Vimuttimaggā by Upatissa, The Path of Freedom, trans. Ehara, 1961.

Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa, The Path of Purification, trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, Buddhist Publication Society, 1975.

Contemporary Theravada Abhidhamma Studies:

“Abhidhamma Abhivinaya (in the first two Pitakas of the Pali Canon)”, I. B. Horner, IHQ, vol. XVII, no. 3, pp. 291-310.

<http://www.buddhanet.net/budsas/ebud/ebud064.htm>

Abhidhamma in Daily Life by Nina van Gorkom, 1969. Online at: <http://www.dhammadownload.com/abhid.html>

Abhidhamma Studies, Nyanaponika Thera, 1965 Edition. (Good essays but it's view of Sarvastivada is a bit thin).

Buddha Abhidhamma, Mehn Tin Mon, 1995. Online at: http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/abhidhaultsci.pdf

Cetasika by Nina van Gorkom, Zolag, 1999. Online at: <http://www.dhammadownload.com/cetasikas.html>

Guide Through the Abhidhammapitaka, Nyanatiloka Mahathera, 1971. (Good overview of the main teachings and analytical methodologies of the 7 canonical Theravada Abhidharma texts.)

Psycho-Ethical Aspects of Abhidhamma - Rina Sircar, 1999.

Swallowing the River Ganges, by Matthew Flickstein, 2001 (Good epitome of the main practice points of Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*.)

Tree of Enlightenment by Peter Santina (Part 4), online at: <http://www.ecst.csuchico.edu/~dsantina/tree/>

Unlimiting Mind: The Radically Experiential Psychology of Buddhism, Andrew Olendski, 2010.

Tibetan Abhidharma (mostly Yogacara, Dignaga and Dharmakirti, but some Madhyamaka):

Buddhist Psychology, by Tashi Tsering, 2006. (Good overview of mind and mental factors and Buddhist epistemology with some innovative constructions.)

Gateway to Knowledge by Mipham Rinpoche Vol I, trans Erik Pema Kunsang 1997 (Concise exposition of Abhidharma emphasizing the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* presentation but making reference to the *Abhidharmakosa*.)

Glimpses of Abhidharma, by Chogyam Trungpa, 1975. (An informal study structured around the five skandhas)

In presentations of the four tenet systems, the first presents a kind of generic interpretation of Vaibhasika Sarvastivada. See:

Cutting Through Appearances, Maps of the Profound, Appearance and Reality, Relative Truth Ultimate Truth, etc.

Map of the Mind by Norman Fischer (and more...) online at:

http://www.everydayzen.org/index.php?option=com_teaching&task=studyguide&topic=Buddhist%20Psychology&Itemid=27

Meditation on Emptiness, Jeffrey Hopkins, 1983. (see especially pp. 213-274 for a variant exposition of the *dharma*s)

Mind in Buddhist Psychology: The Necklace of Clear Understanding by Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan, trans Herbert Guenther & Leslie Kawamura, 1975. (Explicates the mental factors of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.)

The Mind and its Functions, by Geshe Rabten, trans Stephan Batchelor, 1992.

Two Views of Mind: Abhidharma and Neuroscience, by Christopher deCharms, 1997. (What Abhidharma and brain science have to offer each other from the Gelugpa presentation of the Sautrantika tenet system (Dignaga & Dharmakirti).)

Note: There are other books, many articles and sections of books, dissertations, etc. not included here. See the massive bibliography from Karl Potter, ed. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Vol I at:

<http://faculty.washington.edu/kpotter/ckeyt/b.htm> (Theravada [AB] at the top, Sarvastivada below at {SV})

Sanskrit / Pali / Chinese Resources:

Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary:

http://doc.thanhsiang.org/Online_Dic/MW_Sanskrit/index1.html

<http://faculty.washington.edu/prem/mw/>

Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary (Franklin Edgerton):

http://doc.thanhsiang.org/Online_Dic/Buddhist_Hybrid_Sanskrit_Dictionary/index1.html

Pali-English Dictionary (T. W. Rhys Davids):

http://doc.thanhsiang.org/Online_Dic/Pali_Dictionary_R_DAVID/index.html

A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms by William Edward Soothill:

<http://www.acmuller.net/soothill/soothill-hodous.html>

Digital Dictionary of Buddhism:

<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>

Cologne Digital Sanskrit Lexicon:

<http://webapps.uni-koeln.de/tamil/>

Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines (Nyanatiloka):

<http://www.kusala.org/udharma2/dictionary/bdindex.html>

http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/palidict.pdf

English-Vietnamese (with Sanskrit) Buddhist Dictionary:

<http://www.thuvienhoasen.org/tudienphathoc-anhviet-thienphuc-A.htm>

Regarding Vasubandhu

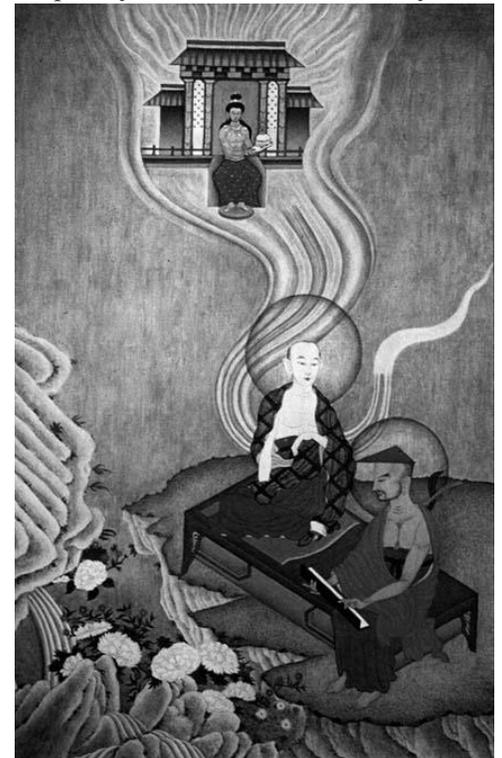


There is not full agreement, but Vasubandhu probably lived around 400-480 C.E.; some scholars place him in the 4th c. Paramartha's (499-569) biography of Vasubandhu is the earliest source for information (and myth) regarding Vasubandhu. Frauwallner famously argued for two Vasubandhu's: one the author of the *Abhidharmakosa* who lived in the 5th c., and the other the Yogacarin who lived in the 4th c. After much debate and consideration of evidence, the general consensus now seems to be that there actually was just one Vasubandhu who composed both the *Abhidharmakosa* and the Yogacara texts. Frauwallner has apparently withdrawn his proposal.

Vasubandhu was born in Purusapura, present-day Peshawar, in what was then the Kingdom of Gandhara. His older brother was Asanga (regarded, with Vasubandhu, as a founder of Yogacara). According to the Tibetan tradition, they were half-brothers. Apparently Vasubandhu was his given name which he kept through his life as a monk. Vasubandhu entered the Sarvastivadin order prominent in Gandhara at that time. He was a bright student and made an extensive study of the Vaibhasika teaching. His teachers in Gandhara were Buddhimitra and Manoratha. He started to have doubts about the Vaibhasika system and decided to travel to Kashmir, the center of Vaibhasika learning, to work deeper into this system. In Kashmir for four years, he studied under Sanghabhadra's teacher, Skandhila. He frequently voiced refutations of key

points of the Vaibhasika doctrine. Skandhila apparently saw into Vasubandhu's potential and advised him to return to Gandhara for his own safety.

Upon his return, Vasubandhu lived in a small private house in the middle of Purusapura, supporting himself by giving public lectures on the Vaibhasika system. At the close of each day's lecture, Vasubandhu composed a summary verse. Paramartha states: "Each verse was engraved on a copper plate. This he hung on the head of an intoxicated elephant, and, beating a drum made the following proclamation: 'Is there anyone who can refute the principles set forth in this treatise? Let him who is competent to do so come forth!'" In time, Vasubandhu composed around 600 verses giving a comprehensive outline of the entire Vaibhasika doctrine. This was the *karika* of the *Abhidharmakosa*. Vasubandhu sent this text to his old teachers in Kashmir. The Kashmirian masters were quite pleased with Vasubandhu's brilliant epitome, but they were some questions about the frequent use of terms such as "kila" ("it is claimed" or "according to them") and "ity ahuh" ("so they say") which seemed to express some skepticism towards the doctrines quoted and thus asked him to write a commentary on the verses. When the Kashmirians received the *Abhidharmakosabhasyam*, in which Vasubandhu criticizes a number of pivotal Vaibhasika positions, they were enraged, as attested by the original title of Sanghabhadra's commentary on the *Abhidharmakosa*, "Hailstones on the Kosa," venting: "that man whose theories have the coherence of the cries of a mad deaf-mute in a fever-dream." The *Abhidharmakosa* however prevailed and was very highly regarded, even by the Mahayana schools (which regarded the Sarvastivada and the *Abhidharmakosa* as Hinayana). In the first half of the 7th c., the Kosasastra was so widely studied in India that one commentator noted, "even parrots recited the Kosa to one another."



Vasubandhu holds a scroll, Asanga receives inspiration from above.

Vasubandhu thus achieved notoriety as a fairly young man. He travelled some and settled for sometime in Ayodhya. He was for some time uninterested in, and perhaps even repelled by, the Mahayana pursuits of his brother Asanga. Asanga decided to try and convert his brother. There are differing accounts of this event. In one version, Asanga sent a letter to Vasubandhu requesting his company as he was sick and close to end. When Vasubandhu arrived, Asanga asked him to recite Mahayana sutras to him for comfort. By the time Vasubandhu finished reciting the sutras for Asanga, he was converted. However, Vasubandhu's *Pancaskandha-Prakarana*, and *Karmasiddhi-prakarana* suggest a more gradual transformation. (A completely different notion of the intent and origin of the *Abhidharmakosa* places it after Vasubandhu's conversion to the Mahayana as a kind of confession in atonement for denigrating the Hinayana.)

Vasubandhu participated part in a number of major debates, both against Buddhists of other schools and non-Buddhists. Losing a major debate could involve forced conversions or banishment. Victory could bring great wealth and Vasubandhu was said to have used his winnings for building monasteries, hospitals, and schools. Late in life, he wrote the important



Yogacara treatises, *Vimsatika* (Twenty Verses) and *Trimsika* (Thirty Verses). At some point in his later years, it is said that Sanghabhadra sought him out and challenged Vasubandhu to defend the *Abhidharmakosa*. He declined pleading lack of interest (he had evolved quite a bit since the Kosa) and old age (this account consistently appears very near the end of Vasubandhu's life). In some accounts, Vasubandhu, hearing that Sanghabhadra was coming to debate him, fled, excusing himself in one version by saying there was no-one in the area who could adequately judge the debate, and in another version, because he thought it was unwise to confront Sanghabhadra (who in this last account had been his Vaibhasika teacher).

The Tibetan scholar Buston reports that while Vasubandhu was in the north, he went to visit a monk named Handu. Handu was inebriated, and carrying an immense pot of wine on his shoulder. Vasubandhu upon seeing this cried, "Alas! The Doctrine will go to ruin", recited the *Usnisa-vijaya-dhārani* in reverse order, and died. According to Taranatha, however, Vasubandhu was prompted to recite the dharani in reverse order when he saw a monk ploughing in his monastic robes.

[Statue of Vasubandhu at Kofukuji]

Reflection on the composition of the *Abhidharmakosabhasyam*

The story above explains a striking feature of the *Abhidharmakosa* – whereas the verses expound the Vaibhasika system, the commentary often refutes it. However, it seems doubtful that the verses were composed first in their entirety as a stand-alone work. Certain verses are incoherent without interlineal commentary. Also, Vasubandhu is clearly basing his work on the earlier *Hrdaya* texts which consisted of verse and auto-commentary. The verses in these works seem to be offered as a mnemonic device to help students retain the essential points and structure of the system as a whole. As such, the verses are like a skeleton or rough frame of the text. The actual system is explicated by the verses and commentary together. The verses hint at dissension from the Vaibhasika orthodoxy. Perhaps as Vasubandhu composed the text, his own hesitations regarding the Vaibhasika system deepened until the commentary took a turn from explication to actually refuting many of the essential Sarvastivadin tenets. Such a process may have unfolded over the course of a number of years.

Mahayana Portents in the *Abhidharmakosa*

There are a few places where Vasubandhu expresses a deep appreciation of the path of the bodhisattva which can be seen as portents of his later full-fledged conversion to the Mahayana. In Chapter III, K93d-94a bhasya, Vasubandhu discusses the extremely long path to Buddhahood and praises this path as superior for its compassionate heart and in K94c states that Pratyekabuddhas do not teach others because they lack courage and fear being distracted by entering into human relationships. In Chapter IV, K108-125 Vasubandhu discusses the Bodhisattva path including the 6 paramitas, including a detailed analysis of *dana-paramita*, the completion of giving. In Chapter VII, K28-33 discuss the 18 *dharma*s unique to the Buddhas, including an extensive analysis of how great compassion differs from ordinary compassion and K34 includes an extensive discussion of the perfections, or excellences, of the Buddhas. The *Kosa* itself begins with a verse in praise of the Buddha (Ch I, K1). Vasubandhu also explores the question of why Sakyamuni opted to be born from a womb (Ch III, K9), how the Buddha attains extinction (Ch II, K44), Buddha omniscience (Ch II, K62), the Buddha's great purity of action and knowledge (Ch III, K17), whether two Buddhas can exist in the same universe (Ch III, K95-96), the superior marks of the Buddha (Ch III, K97), the mind of the Buddhas (Ch IV, K12), taking refuge in the Buddha (Ch IV, K32), the path of the Buddha (Ch VI, K23-24), Buddha giving up of bliss (Ch VI, K59), the relative faculties of the Buddhas (Ch VI, K62), faith in the Buddha (Ch VI, K73-75), the Buddha's knowledge of other's minds (Ch VII, K6), nature and extent of the Buddha's acquisition and exercise of powers, knowledges, etc. (Ch VII, K41-55), and the Buddhas as authoritative in the interpretation of the dharma (Ch VIII, K40). Other passages extol the value of preaching the dharma (Ch IV, K118, Ch VII, K47, Ch VIII, K39).

Note on Studying the *Abhidharmakosa*: The *Abhidharmakosa* appears to have been composed for *Abhidharmikas*, that is, full time *Abhidharma* specialists. It presumes a strong foundation in the teachings. It is not suitable as an introductory text. Even with a foundation in the Sutra literature and *Abhidharma* teachings, the *Kosa* is quite long and very dense. Vasubandhu seems to be quite averse to repetition (sometimes the reader needs to connect the dots, e.g. Ch V only discusses the *klesa* not already introduced in Ch II's explication of mental states, or the exposition of the Truths in Ch I and VI). The *Kosa* offers a highly organized and (relatively) concise presentation of a vast store of teachings, and also problematizes a set doctrinal tenets central to the Sarvastivada. In my own course of study, I read through the text once to get a sense of the whole. Then I read as much as I could on *Abhidharma* in general (from the bibliography above). Then I went through the *Kosa* again slowly, and also memorized the *Karika*, while teaching a class on the *Kosa* and preparing these Study Materials. Trungpa, the Dalai Lama & Geshe Michael Roach all mention memorization of the *karika* as a standard approach to studying the text. I found memorizing the *karika* very helpful and illuminating. Shi Hui Feng 釋慧峰 (MB Orsborn) relayed in an email: "If you really want to get into the *Kosa*, then you'll have to get into the Mahavibhasa. If you want to get into the Mahavibhasa, then apart from Sanskrit, obviously, you'll find Chinese is a requisite, too." I was not able to do this. Clearly it would help to clarify what Vasubandhu is summarizing and, at times, arguing against, as a number of points are not fully worked out, left unexplained, assume familiarity with the debate/issue, etc.

Abhidharma Methodology

Abhidharma methodology includes a number of aspects of which the following play an important role in the Kosa:

Dharmas: This is the analysis of what is happening into a collection of distinct forces. See the section on Dharma Theory below and also the study of the 75 Dharmas in the study materials for Chapter 2. The *dharmas* are explicated in abstract in Chapters 1 and 2 and more concretely (in terms of the processes of suffering and liberation) in Chapters 3-8.

Causes and Conditions: This is the study of how *dharmas* function. The abstract presentation is made in Chapter 2 (also see the Hetu-Pratyaya-Phala Study in the study materials). The study of causes and conditions unfolds in a more concrete manner in the analysis of 12-fold dependent co-arising in Chapter 3 and the analysis of various groups of *dharmas* in terms of results (in Chapter 4, K85-95, for example).

Attributes: This includes various categories (often dyads & triads, but also quads, etc) into which the *dharmas* are analyzed. For some, see the section below: "Some Basic Categories of Abhidharma Thought." In the Abhidharmakosa, the most important categories are introduced in K4-8 of Chapter 1 (see Chapter 1 Study). The second half of Chapter 1 carries out an extensive attribute study of the *dhatu*s. A similar study of the *indriya*s is carried out in Chapter 2. Other attribute studies occur through the text (on the *citta-viprayukta dharmas* in Ch II, the 37 limbs of awakening in Ch VI, the 10 Knowledges in Ch VII, etc.). The categories of analysis themselves are treated at various points (see the Attribute Studies in the Supplemental Materials). Analysis in terms of attributes serve to emphasize certain fundamental categories, illustrate how the *dharmas* or factors in a given analysis are distinct from each other and generally work towards a sense of how all the pieces of the system work together. In working out the interrelations of the system in such a detailed manner, points of disagreement are highlighted.

Argumentation: Debate is a major aspect of Abhidharma methodology. A variety of positions on a number of controversies are presented in the Kosa. Two primary forms of argumentation are employed: arguments from reason and appeals to scripture (which often coincide as appeals to scripture almost always involve *interpretation*).

Major Doctrinal Controversies in the Abhidharmakosa:

- Ch I: - Which organs exist in Rupadhatu? (K30)
- What sees – the eye or consciousness? (K42) *
- Ch II: - Do mental factors co-exist in a moment of consciousness? (K32) (also see related debate in Ch III: K32) *
- Are the *dharmas* not associated with mind actual forces or mere designations? (K35-47) *
- Are the unconditioned *dharmas* actual forces or mere designations? (K55) *
- Ch III: - Is there an intermediate existence between one life and the next? (K12)
- What is contact (*sparsa*)? (K30) *
- Can Buddhas appear simultaneously in the universe(s)? (K96)
- Ch IV: - How is everything momentary? (K3)
- Is shape a distinct thing? (K3) *
- Is *avijnapti* (non-informative matter) an actual force or mere designation? (K4) *
- Ch V: - Are *anusaya* latent defilements or defilements themselves? (K2) *
- Do the *dharmas* exist in the three time periods? (K27) *
- Ch VI: - Are there really agreeable experiences (what is the meaning of truth of suffering)? (K3)
- Can *arhats* fall away from being *arhats*? (K58) *
- Ch VII: - What is the nature of a defiled mind? (K11)
- Ch VIII: - Is *samadhi* (concentration) an actual force or mere designation? (K1) *
- Is there a subtle *rupa* (materiality) in Arupyadhatu? (K3)
- What is the definition of happiness in the *dhyanas*? (K9) *
- Ch IX: - Is there a person (*pudgala*) neither the same nor different from the 5 *skandhas*?

* = disputations of Sarvastivada positions. The Sarvastivadins hold that the eye sees, that numerous mental factors co-exist in a single moment of consciousness, that the *dharmas* not associated with mind, the unconditioned *dharmas*, contact, shape, *avijnapti* and *samadhi* are all real distinct forces (established by their own-being), that *anusayas* are manifest defilements, that the *dharmas* exist in the three time periods and that *arhats* who are not immovable can fall away from being *arhats*. These positions are all called into question in the Kosa.

There are in addition to the controversies outlined above, numerous minor controversies discussed throughout the Kosa.

Dharma Theory

Dharma is a term with wide-ranging meanings and as Abhidharma developed, its function was expanded with meanings and connotations which were to some extent unprecedented. The notion of the *dharmas*, and thus the dharma theory itself, evolved with the development of new analytical approaches and innovative doctrines. In the course of these developments, lists of *dharmas* tended to consolidate as stricter methods of analysis weeded out repetition and redundancy, while the development of new teachings led them also to expand as they accommodated new concepts (e.g. viprayukta-samskaras).

Abhidharmakosa I.3 expresses the central role of dharma-pravicara (discernment of *dharmas*) in the process of liberation from suffering: “Apart from the discernment of the *dharmas*, there is no means to extinguish the defilements, and it is by reason of the defilements that the world wanders in the ocean of existence.” The study and clear discernment of the *dharmas* is the Abhidharma way of studying the self and forgetting the self. Dharma theory is essentially a form of meditation. The discernment of *dharmas* has two basic modes. One is an evaluative analysis clearly distinguishing what is conducive to awakening and thus to be cultivated and what is conducive to cyclic suffering and thus to be abandoned. The second is a descriptive analysis of ordinary experience in order to reveal its true structure and thereby release all attachment to the supposition of a self. Conze states: “[*Dharmas* are] elementary constituents of emancipating cognition.”

In the fully developed form of the later Sarvastivada, **dharmas are real distinct types of forces** (in and of experience).

a) **Dharmas are distinct** – they cannot be reduced to each other. Note however that they are not separate as they do not function in isolation. The samskṛta *dharmas* are conditioned so they have parts and aspects. Many conditions give rise to one dharma which functions in various ways. They are irreducible only in the sense that reducing them further strips them of their distinct quality. AKB I.18: “A dharma is included in its own nature because it is distinct from the nature of others.”

b) **Dharma are forces, functions or efficacies** – *Dharmas* are not things or substances. They are dynamic events rather than static entities. The only way samskṛta *dharmas* exist is as conditioned and conditioning forces. To exist is to cause and be caused. No dharma has only one cause and all *dharmas* have multiple causal functions within the Sarvastivada analysis of causation. *Dharmas* have no existence aside from their causal role. For the Sarvastivadins, denying the reality of the *dharmas* amounts to denying the reality of dependent co-arising. Collett Cox: “They [*dharmas*] represent causally significant points within the complex web of experienced activities, but points that can only be determined relationally and that can only be defined dynamically. These relational distinctions that define *dharmas* are not considered arbitrary, but rather are ‘true’ or express ‘the way things really are’ in the sense that they articulate the fundamental causal structures implicit within all experience.” Note: strictly speaking, unconditioned (asamskṛta) *dharmas* have neither cause nor result, nevertheless, they do have a function which is their characteristic nature establishing their existence as distinct *dharmas*.

c) **Dharmas are tendencies or classes or abstractions or types** – A dharma subsumes a plurality of phenomena. The phenomena that can be classed under a given dharma can vary in degree or intensity as well as quality or kind. *Dharmas* in some pure form do not appear as such. They are types: a given dharma is “typical” of an array of many different phenomena all of the same type. *Dharmas* constitute fundamental regularities underlying and structuring what is happening.

d) **Dharmas are real** – Real in the sense that *dharmas* are established by their own nature as being truly distinct force-tendencies. *Dharmas* are real in that they have ultimate existence in contrast to composite entities, such as the self, a pot, common-sense things, etc. which only have conventional existence. Conventional entities depend on designation for their existence, *dharmas* do not. AKB I.2: “Dharma is that which bears (dharana) self-(or unique) characteristics.” Intrinsic nature is able to “uphold” or “bear” its own identity. These definitions play on the root of dharma: dhr – “to hold”.

MOMENTARINESS (KSANIKĀ) (see Ch IV, K2 Bhasya): A close corollary of dharma theory and an important factor in its development is “momentariness”, a radical interpretation of impermanence by which *dharmas* flash into existence for a single instant (*ksana*) and then immediately pass away. Nothing about anything is substantial, fixed & unchanging from one moment to the next. An individual person, in such a context, not possessing self-existence, but still evincing some form of continuity, is referred to as a “series” (*santati* or *santana*), that is, a flux or continuum of *dharmas*, “an unceasing flow of simple ultimates, called ‘*dharmas*’, which can be defined as (1) multiple, (2) momentary, (3) impersonal, (4) mutually conditioned events” (Conze). There are various attempts to define the extent of these instants: 6,499,099,980 per day (or 75,211 per second) in the *Mahāvibhāsa*, and in the *Abhidharmakosa*, 6,480,000 per day (or 75 per second, see AKB III.88). Regardless of their duration, instants were universally held to be discrete and uniform, which leads to a number of problems.

A set of significant related terms arises in dharma theory:

Svabhava – “own-being” or “intrinsic nature”: true distinct classes/categories of events established by inclusion (samgraha).

Dravya – “substance”: the ontological status of manifesting *dharmas* as real & discrete, established by their function.

Svalaksana – “specific or own- characteristic”: the feature which uniquely distinguishes a *dharma* (see 75 Dharmas in Ch II).

Samanya-laksana – “common characteristic”: shared by many *dharmas* (impermanence, not-self..., see 16 Aspects in Ch VI).

Samgraha – “subsumption or inclusion”: study of intrinsic nature, analytic tool by which *dharmas* are classified and established as truly distinct. (The basic mode of using the *skandhas*, etc. in practice to study and be intimate with one’s life.)

Samprayoga – “association or conjunction”: studying the dynamic interaction of *dharmas* by analysis of which mental factors are conscent: which *dharmas* always, sometimes, never, etc. arise with such-and-such *dharmas*, in various conditions.

Sarvastiva: Everything Exists

At its basis, the doctrine of *Sarvastiva*, that everything exists, seems to have been a simple affirmation of cause and effect: past *dharmas* exist, as present *dharmas* arise based on them, and future *dharmas* exist, as the present *dharmas* will give rise to them. However, as this position came to be examined in Abhidharma disputations, a set implications and elaborations unfolded as to what it really meant. Opposed to the *Sarvasti* thesis was a group of schools collected under the designation, Vibhajyavada (including the Mahasasika, Dharmagupta and later, the Sautrantika). The Vibhajyavada held that only present *dharmas* exist. Past *dharmas* have existed, futures *dharmas* will come into existence, but only present *dharmas* really exist. Vibhajyavada positions sometimes also include the position that past karma that has not yet come to fruition exists.

Sarvastiva eventually came to be articulated as affirming that past, present and future *dharmas* all truly exist. Some of the main arguments for Sarvastiva include (from Cox): (1) when a cause precedes its effect as in Karmic causation, the past cause must exist in order to provide an existent cause for the arising of a present effect; (2) the existence of past causes or future effects can be inferred from the occurrence of their effects or causes in the present; and (3) perceptual consciousness, meditative states, memory, and so forth, require an existent object-support. Vasubandhu quotes and then refutes four arguments for Sarvastiva in chapter 5 of the *Kosa*.

But what does it really mean to assert that everything exists? How is it that everything does not all happen at once? The Sarvastivada response basically confirms the above dharma theory notion that existence is causal efficacy. There is then a distinction of a specific kind of causal efficacy which *dharmas* only exert when they are presently manifesting, “karitra” (activity). Other forms of efficacy can be exerted by a dharma in the three times, in concert with other cooperating causes and conditions. Sarvastiva, and other Sarvastivadin doctrines (such as the notion of acquisition (prapti)), can also be seen as a practical attempt to insert some non-momentary reality into the relentless momentariness of the dharma theory.

Sarvastiva seems to have been based in a responsible attitude toward the past and future that some practitioner’s may have obscured in emphasizing the reality of present moment. The Sarvastivada denied the existence of time as a separate container that *dharmas* happen within. The past is past *dharmas* and the future is future *dharmas*. As Sarvastiva came to be developed as a doctrine of existence, however, it became problematic. Vasubandhu and others had substantial objections to Sarvastiva and associated resolutions to a number of key questions and problems. The Sautranika (and Yogacara) resolution to many of these problems with a “seed (bija) theory” would prove to be far more influential in the long run.

Some Basic Categories of Abhidharma Thought (see also Attribute Studies in Supplemental Materials)

Sasrava – With-outflow, impure, stained, conducive to the growth of the defilements, influenced by ignorance.

Anasrava – Outflow-free, pure, unstained, tending toward appeasement of the defilements under the influence of wisdom.

This is the first category introduced in the Abhidharmakosa. It is pivotal and can be hard to understand. *Abhidharmakosa*: “*Dharmas* are either with-outflow or outflow-free. The conditioned, with the exception of the noble path, are with-outflows, for therein the outflows grow concordantly. It is true that the outflows are born taking the *nirodha*- and *marga-satya* as objects, but they do not grow concordantly therein; thus it does not follow that the two are of the nature of being with-outflow.” In other words, everything in our life, with the exception of the path, is *sasrava*, meaning that it either is produced by, produces, or is itself, ignorance and the defilements based on ignorance. This is then one of the fundamental undertakings of the discernment of *dharmas*: clearly discerning *sasrava/anasrava dharmas*. This distinction amounts to the distinction between enlightened (*anasrava*) & unenlightened (*sasrava*).

Samskrta – Conditioned, compounded, made, constructed. With the exception of the path, impure (*sasrava*). A dharma is said to be conditioned if it has arising and ceasing, cause and effect, and acquires the characteristics of the conditioned. Conditioned *dharmas* are momentary.

Asamskrta – Unconditioned, uncompounded, unmade, unconstructed. Always pure (*anasrava*). A dharma is said to be unconditioned if it has no arising and ceasing, no cause and effect, and acquires the characteristics of the unconditioned. Unconditioned *dharmas* have no activity. They are totally beyond temporal process, but they do have a function.

Kusala – Skillful, tending towards integration and balance, beneficial, good, wholesome.

Akusala – Unskillful, tending towards disintegration and imbalance, detrimental, evil, unwholesome.

Avyakrta – (Morally) non-defined, neither beneficial nor unbeneficial, neutral, indeterminate, of indistinct nature.

This classification concerns the moral causal order in terms of karma (action) of body, speech and mind (discussed in Ch IV) as well as the collections of mental factors (discussed in Ch II).

| | Sasrava (impure – tending to defilement) | Anasrava (pure – releases the defilements) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Kusala (skillful) | Leads to higher birth, conducive to liberation | Leads to liberation |
| Akusala (unskillful) | Leads to bondage and lower birth | N/A |
| Avyakrta (undefined) | Leads to bondage | Does not obstruct liberation |

Kusala karma is helpful and necessary but in itself not fundamentally liberating as long as it is *sasrava*. In addition to kusala action, there needs to be realization: the development of “pure prajna” (=Abhidharma, AKI.2). *Sasrava* thus has a greater scope than *akusala*.

Samprayukta – Conjoined, associated. Refers to the collections of mental factors that arise with any given mind.

Viprayukta – Disjoined, disassociated. Refers to formations (*samskara*) not strictly material or mental.(see 75 Dharmas, Ch II)

Abhidharmakosa – Basic Structure, Outline, etc.

BASIC STRUCTURE and CONTENT:

The *Abhidharmakosa* consists of nine chapters. The first eight chapters are built around 598 root-verses (karika) embedded in auto-commentary (bhāṣya). The Pradhan Sanskrit edition has 598 slokas whereas the Gokhale Sanskrit edition has 600 slokas (adding one each to Ch V (71 sloka) and Ch VI (80 sloka)). The 2 karikas added in the Gokhale edition appear to be karikas composed as part of the Bhāṣya clarification. A sloka is a Sanskrit verse consisting of two sixteen-syllable lines of two eight-syllable padas each. In Xuanzang's Chinese translation, typically 1 sloka = four 5-character phrases (except for the opening 3 & closing 4 slokas, which are in a different meter: the Chinese here consists of four 7-kanji phrases). Xuanzang's translation of just the Karika (T1560), totals 608 sloka (see table). Xuanzang's Kosabhāṣya translation (T1558) has a still different total.

This structure is based on the *Samprayuktābhidharma-hrdaya* by Dharmatrata, which consists 596 karika with auto-commentary. The *Kosa* borrows phrases, and at times, entire verses, from the *Samprayuktābhidharma-hrdaya*. The *Samprayuktābhidharma-hrdaya* is itself based on two earlier *Hrdaya* (heart or essence) texts by Dharmasri and Upasanta (which were smaller works both containing around 250 verses). Vasubandhu adapted the overall organization from the *Samprayuktābhidharma-hrdaya* as well which consists of 11 chapters. Vasubandhu kept the first 7 chapters of this work, inserted a new chapter after chapter 2 (renamed Indriya (faculties) from Samskara (formations)) on the World (which has no corresponding chapter in Dharmatrata), and integrated the content of Dharmatrata's final 4 chapters (Sutra, Miscellany, Investigations, Discussion) into the other 8 chapters. Chapter 9 of the *Abhidharmakosa* appears to have been added later as an appendix. Of this series of comprehensive manuals of doctrine, the *Kosa* is regarded as the most organized & coherent.

Karika (Chapters 1-8):

- Based mostly on the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, the karika present the Vaibhāsika system (condensing ~10,000 pages into 600 verses).
- The verses aim at an organized encapsulation of a comprehensive approach to the entire teaching.
- The verses are very concise and apparently designed to be memorized. (Composed for Abhidharmikas, basically in code.)
- The verses hint at some dissension from the Vaibhāsika position (*kīla*: “according to the school”)

Bhāṣya (Chapters 1-8):

- The bhāṣya explains and expands upon the teachings expressed in a very concise form, or merely referred to, in the karika.
- The bhāṣya also quotes and discusses arrays divergent positions on certain points (and often presumes that the relevance and significance of the debate is clear to its audience).
- The bhāṣya presents arguments (and counter-arguments, etc) on many controversial points of doctrine.
- The bhāṣya refutes key Vaibhāsika doctrines, sometimes aligning itself as Sautrāntika, but not always.

NOTE: It is good to keep in mind that the agenda of Bhāṣya is to some extent distinct from the Karika. The Bhāṣya refutes certain positions that then continue to re-emerge in the Karika – as the Karika represents a single coherent flow of Vaibhāsika doctrine.

Chapter 9:

- The karika at the end of chapter 8 formally close the *Abhidharmakosa*. Chapter 9 appears to have been added later.
- It is not clear if it was written before, during or after the composition of the *Kosa*. The Bhāṣya includes two references to the 9th chapter: Ch IV, K73a-b (pg 650) and Ch V, K27b-c (pg 818).
- It differs from the rest of the text both in terms of its structure: it does not consist of verses with commentary, and content: it does not present, explicate or refute Vaibhāsika views, but rather, refutes views of a person and soul.

SCHOOLS:

Sarvastivāda:

One of the earliest and most important Abhidharma schools. Sarva means “all” & asti means “exist”. They held that all *dharma*s, past, present and future, exist (see below). Across North India.

Vaibhāsika:

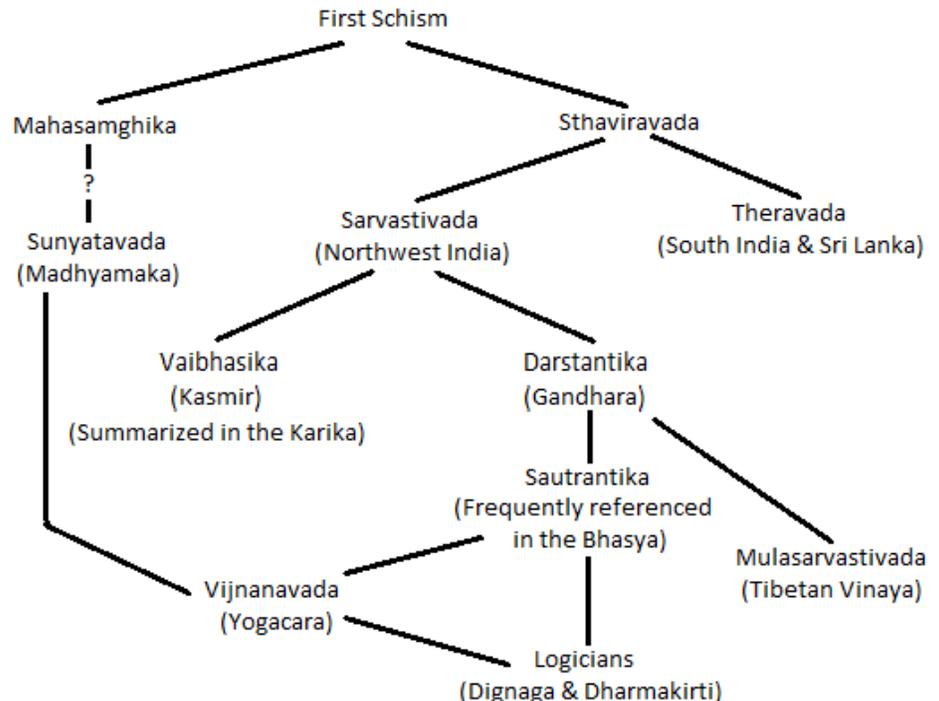
A sub-sect of the Sarvastivāda, centered in Kasmir. Based on the positions of the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, “The Great Commentary”. Strong tendency towards establishing a set of orthodox position with little toleration of divergent views.

Darstantika:

Heterodox Sarvastivāda teachings centered in Gandhara. Sautrāntika evolved from the Darstantika.

Sautrāntika:

Their name is interpreted by some as indicating they upheld the Sūtras against the Abhidharma. However, they did engage in Abhidharma, but did not necessarily recognize an Abhidharma-pitaka. They may have simply been a force of criticism. Only a few references to Sautrāntika before the *Kosa*.



| Ch # | Chapter Titles | # of karika: Sanskrit (Xuanzang) | Traditional Analysis | | Overview of Contents by Chapter (each chapter is rather complex and thoroughly conceived coherent flow) | |
|------|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| I | <i>Dhatu-nirdesa</i> 分別界品第一 Elements / Companents | 48 (47) [76 pgs (= karika + bhāṣya in Pruden)] | Foundation Dharmas: The Reals (General Presentation of pure and impure dharmas) Basic Principles | Substance. Showing the nature of the substance (dravya) of the dharmas (emphasizing what dharmas are) | 1. Basic classifications of the Dharmas: Skandhas, Ayatanas, Dhatus. Definition of terms. Key categories introduced: conditioned/ unconditioned, pure/impure, etc. The various categorizations of the dhatus in K29-48 can be seen as a kind of integral summary of all the subjects to be discussed in terms of how they subsume the dhatus. | |
| II | <i>Indriya-nirdesa</i> 分別根品第二 Faculties / Organs | 73 (74) [173 pgs] | | Function. Showing the function (kriya) of the dharmas (emphasizing how dharmas function and arise) | | 2. Psychology of Samsara and Nirvana: continues the analysis of Ch I with the faculties, and then moving to the caitta (mental factors). The Pancavastuka scheme is covertly completed with the inclusion of the Viprayukta-samskaras (disjoined conditionings). Also includes the Sar- vastivadin theory of causation based on 6 causes, 4 conditions & 5 results. |
| III | <i>Loka-nirdesa</i> 分別世界品第三 World / Cosmos | 102 (100) [131 pgs] | Samsara The Illusional World (see AKIII.26-27) (Presentation of impure (sasrava) dharmas) | Result. Effect. Manifestation. The World and transmigration as the outcome of sasrava dharmas (the who, where and how of affliction) | 3. Cosmology. Describes a) worlds or realms of sentient beings (sattva- loka) and b) world as container or receptacle in which beings live (bhajana- loka). Different classifications of the realms of beings, mechanism of rebirth, modes of birth, differences in beings, the measurement of matter and time, kalpas and the creation & destruction of worlds. Also includes an analysis of 12-fold dependent co-arising. | |
| IV | <i>Karma-nirdesa</i> 分別業品第四 Action | 127 (131) [154 pgs] | | Cause. Immediate Cause. Action as the cause of the world and repeated existences (what makes affliction part a) | | 4. Defines and enumerates many classifications of karma: in terms of body, speech & mind, informative & non-informative (avijnapti – treated extensively in terms of discipline, non-discipline, etc), determinate & indeterminate, karmic result, etc. Includes discussions of the 10 karmapatha (courses of action), bodhisattva practices, etc. |
| V | <i>Anusaya-nirdesa</i> 分別隨眠品第 (Latent) Defilements | 70 (69) [102 pgs] | | Condition. Underlying Condition. Defilements as the condition for repeated existences (what makes affliction part b) | | 5. Extensive analysis of the defilements in terms of their varieties, functions and abandonment. Focuses on the anusayas (lists of 6,7,10,98) & klesa (defilements), and then goes on to discuss: fetters (samyojana), bondages (bandhana), envelopments (paryavasthana), outflows (asrava), floods (ogha), yokes (yoga), clings (upadana), corporeal ties (kaya-grantha) and hindrances (nivarana). |
| VI | <i>Pudgala-marga-nir- desa</i> 分別賢聖品第六 Noble Ones / The Paths and the Saints | 79 (83) [146 pgs] | Liberation The Awakened World (Presentation of pure (anasrava) dharmas) | Result. Effect. Manifestation. The path and the Noble Ones as an effect of anasrava or Nirvana (the who, where and how of purification) | 6. Discusses the Four Noble Truths and describes the stages of the Path of Preparation, the Path of Seeing, the Path of Cultivation & the Path Beyond Training. Different classifications of trainees and arhats are discussed and the 37 bodhipaksha (limbs or wings of awakening). | |
| VII | <i>Jnana-nirdesa</i> 分別智品第七 Knowledges | 56 (61) [94 pgs] | | Cause. Immediate Cause. The knowledges as the cause of anasrava or Nirvana (what makes for purification) | | 7. 10 Knowledges are analyzed in terms of their characteristics, aspects, classifications. Also discusses: 18 qualities unique to a Buddha (10 powers, 4 assurances, 3 applications of mindfulness & great compassion), 6 supernormal knowledges, etc. |
| VIII | <i>Samapatti-nirdesa</i> 分別定品第八 Attainments / Absorptions | 43 (43) [68 pgs] | | Condition. Underlying Condition. Meditative equipoise as the condition of anasrava or Nirvana (what provides a basis for the knowledges) | | 8. Analyzes 4 rupa-dhyanas & 4 arupya-dhyanas, preparatory absorp-tions, 3 samadhis (emptiness, signless, wishless), 4 immeasurables (goodwill, compassion, joy, equanimity), 8 deliverances, etc. |
| IX | <i>Pudgala-viniscaya</i> 破執我品第九 Refutation of the Person | n/a [some say 16] [43 pgs] | Appendix | (This chapter appears to have been added later and does not really have a place in the above structure.) | 9. Using arguments by reason and citation of Sutras, and responding to counter-arguments, the text refutes theories of a person (pudgala) and soul (atman) attributed to the Vatsiputriya (Buddhist school of the Pudgalavadins), as well as Samkhya and Vaisesika (significant non- Buddhist schools of Indian thought). | |

On the Basic Organization of the Abhidharmakosa (see the Table above)

The Kosa is often split into 3 parts: Chapters I and II laying out fundamental principles (*dharma*s (*dhatus & indriyas*) and how they function (causes & conditions)) in terms of pure and impure *dharma*s (which must be clearly discerned, Ch I, K3: “Apart from the discernment of the *dharma*s, there is no means to extinguish the defilements, and it is by reason of the defilements that the world wanders in the ocean of existence”; K4 introduces the organizing category of pure (*anasrava*) and impure (*sasrava*)). Chapters III, IV and V unfold the impure *dharma*s in terms of result (Ch III, World), cause (Ch IV, Karma) and condition (Ch V, Defilements). The World is the result of Karma (Ch IV, K1: “The variety of the world arises from action”) and the defilements are the underlying condition (which do not cause the world, but without which, Karma could not cause the world, Ch V, K1: “The roots of existence, that is, of rebirth or of action, are the *anuśayas*”). This basic structure of impure *dharma*s is reflected in the description of the basic process of *samsara* in Ch III, K19: “In conformity with its projecting cause the series grows gradually, and, by virtue of the defilements [Ch V] and actions [Ch IV] it goes again to another world [Ch III]” (see also the analysis of Dependent Co-arising on p. 51). This same structure is then reflected in the next three chapters which unfold pure *dharma*s also in terms of result (Ch VI, The Path & the Saints), cause (Ch VII, Knowledges) and condition (Ch VIII, Meditation). Ch VI, K1, offers clear transition from the impure *dharma*s of Chapters III-V to their destruction and the cultivation of pure *dharma*s in Chapters VI-VIII: “It has been said that the defilements are abandoned through Seeing the Truths and through Meditation. The Path of Meditation is of two types; the Path of Seeing is pure.” Once again, the Knowledges are the cause of the path, but they can only function as such with the underlying condition of meditation (which in and of itself cannot produce the path).

Errors & Problems in the Pruden Translation

Scholars have pointed out a number of problems with Pruden’s work (“Leo Pruden translated the French version into English, though some errors were introduced” – Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology*, pg 565). 1) He states that he has referred to the Sanskrit, but he seems to have actually relied almost completely on Poussin’s French translation of the Chinese (see for example, Ch I, K45, “and also because it is ‘its own’” in comparison with the translations by Jha, Sastri & Hall). 2) He changes some of Poussin’s interpretations incorrectly. 3) He sometimes mistranslates Poussin’s French (specifically misinterpreting double negatives as single negatives). 4) The publication contains a number of typos. 5) Pruden’s introduction introduces a number of historical and interpretive inaccuracies (as reviewed by Collett Cox in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 1990, LVIII pp 137-141).

However, by and large, it is quite usable, if handled with caution, even if not completely reliable (as some errors substantially change the meaning of the passage). A number of the errors I located in the published version are absent in an early unpublished manuscript of Pruden’s translation (located in the library of Green Dragon Temple) These errors thus appear to have been introduced in the preparation of the manuscript for publication, which attempted to eliminate some of the extensive use of Sanskrit terminology in the draft translation. Here are some errors I found, most of which were not in the manuscript:

- Ch II, K65:** “The primary elements are the cause of the derived elements in two ways...” should read: “The primary elements are the cause of the primary elements in two ways...”
- Ch II, K69:** “Six types of mind can arise after such a (defiled-neutral) mind...” should read: “Six types of mind can arise after such a (undefiled-neutral) mind...”
- Ch III, K81:** “In Arupyadhātu, a lifespan of a thousand kalpas...” should read: “In Arupyadhātu, a lifespan of twenty thousand kalpas...”
- Ch III, K88:** “sixteen *tatksanas* make one *lava*...” should read: “sixty *tatksanas* make one *lava*...”
- Ch IV, K27:** “There is undiscipline for a day and night,” should read: “There is not undiscipline for a day and a night.”
- Ch IV, K93:** “*Dharma*s susceptible of being...constitute three results, two results, one result of action susceptible of being abandoned through Seeing the Truths...” should read: “*Dharma*s susceptible of being...constitute three results, four results, one result of action susceptible of being abandoned through Seeing the Truths...”
- Ch IV, K108:** “...and he does not desist (anivrt)...” should read: “...and he does not desist (avivrt).”
- Ch V, K19a Bhāṣya:** “Now suffering does exist in these two spheres...” should read: “Now suffering does not exist in these two spheres...”
- Ch V, K55:** “The view of negation with dissatisfaction and sensation...” should read: “The view of negation with dissatisfaction and satisfaction.”
- Ch V, K29:** “the *dharma*s in Kamadhātu are the sphere of three consciousnesses of this sphere...” should read: “the *dharma*s in Kamadhātu are the domain (or object) of three consciousnesses of this sphere...”
- Ch VII, K10:** “because of the aspect of their Truth...” should read “because of the aspects of their Truth.”
- Ch VII, K11a-b Bhāṣya:** “The knowledge of the mind of another, in its impure part...” should read: “The knowledge of the mind of another, in its pure part...”

In addition to errors, there are also some questionable translation choices:

Pure, undefiled, etc.: In earlier chapters, “pure” is usually a translation of *anasrava*. However, in Chapter VIII, “pure” is used to translate *suddha* which in this context is actually not *anasrava* (*suddha* here refers to absorption that is good and worldly). And while *anasrava* is generally translated by “pure” in earlier chapters (e.g. Ch I, K4 & K31; Ch V, K14; Ch VI, K1; Ch VII, K2, etc.), here in Chapter VIII it is translated as “undefiled.” This connects to another conflation as “undefiled” has been used to translate *aklista* (Ch I, K40; Ch II, K39; Ch III, K4; Ch IV, K98), as well as *anivṛta* (Ch II, K66-73).

Similarly, *amala* is translated as “clean” (Ch II, K9), “pure” (Ch I, K2) and “immaculate” (Ch VIII, K25); “bad” is used to translate *asubha* (Ch II, K54) and *akusala* (Ch II, K29 & K66-73), and *akusala* is also translated as “evil” (Ch IV, K9); *sasrava* is translated as “impure” (Ch I, K4), “defiled” (Ch VIII, K27) and “canker” (Ch V, K35-37) and “defiled” also translates *klesa* (Ch II, K26-27, etc.) and *nivṛta* (Ch II, K66-73).

Although Vasubandhu may sometimes use these terms as synonyms for each other (for example, *amala* & *anasrava*), using the same term, “pure”, to translate *anasrava* and *suddha* is problematic, as is using “undefiled” for *anasrava* and *anivṛta*. Given the subtle and not-so-subtle distinctions between these sets of terms, consistent, careful and distinct translation choices would be helpful, especially given the precise, systematic, detailed and technical nature of the Kosa. There are a number of other such inconsistencies in the translation of terms in the Pruden translation (using the same English word to translate different Sanskrit words and translating the same Sanskrit term with different English terms).

Another set of problematic translation choices concerns various renditions of *upeksa*, a multivalent term that as a passive sensation (*vedana*), refers to a neutral or intermediate sensation, but as a wholesome mental factor (*kusala-mahabhumika*), refers to equanimity as an active aspect of consciousness. Pruden translates *upeksa* in the context of sensation as “indifference” (Ch II, K8) and “equanimity” (Ch II, K8, K17). As a *kusala-mahabhumika*, *upeksa* is translated as “indifference” (Ch II, K25), as an absorption factor, *upeksa* is translated as “equanimity” (Ch VIII, K8) and as the 4th immeasurable (*apramana*), *upeksa* is also translated as “equanimity” (Ch VIII, K29). I think it would be preferable to find two appropriate translations of *upeksa* and consistently apply them according to the context. Related to *upeksa* as neutral sensation, *aduhkhasukha* is various translated as “neither-painful-nor-pleasant” (Ch I, K14), “neither agreeable nor disagreeable” (Ch IV, K47), “neither suffering nor happiness” (Ch VIII, K8), and also as “equanimity” (Ch VIII, K8).

I had heard that there may be problems with the translations of *rupa*, another multivalent term. *Rupa* as the first *skandha* refers to material form or physical matter in general, as the object of the eye-organ, it refers specifically to visible matter, and in the context of the three realms (*dhatu*), *rupa* refers to a subtle materiality of meditation realms based on the transcending of worldly desires (*kama/Kamadhatu*). Generally, Pruden translates these three meanings of *rupa* fairly consistently as matter, visible matter, and *Rupadhatu* (left untranslated) respectively. I did a quick review and I could not spot any problematic renderings.

A number of specific translation choices may also be problematic. Some passages and sections of the Kosa rely on the interpretation of what is at stake in the exposition or argument. It would seem that much work remains to be done. Poussin’s scholarship, though dated, is highly regarded. However, he did not have access to a Sanskrit edition of the text, which is now available.

In these study materials, I have often stuck with Pruden’s translation choices for the sake of clarity in relation to the text, but sometimes, especially when incorporating material from other sources, I have used alternate translations of terms. I have tried to include the Sanskrit as well to avoid adding further confusion. At some point, I would like to go through this study and work on the translation of terminology to make it consistent. I would also like to make a glossary of Sanskrit terms of the Kosa in order to clarify some of these translation problems, and also because Pruden has left quite a few terms in the Sanskrit (sometimes providing a translation the first time the term appears, sometimes not).