

Perspectives on the Person and the Self in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*

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Abstract

This paper examines the approach of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* to the ideas of the person and the self and explores the usefulness of his approach to the study of sentient beings or human beings in the living world. With the thesis of the "selflessness of the person" (*pudgala-nairātmya*), Vasubandhu was operating within a Buddhist philosophical tradition and his critique of the Pudgalavādins or the Tīrthikas however provides a clearing in which important aspects of other traditions and cultures may come to light. Analysis of the problem of wrong views finds one of its clearest expressions in Buddhism in the ninth chapter of the *Abhidharmakośa*. Through an analysis of this important work, this paper will illustrate the significance of the role played by soteriology in Buddhist intellectual thought. This, in turn, may open up new ways of understanding the living world and validating a more developed and systematized soteriological theory.