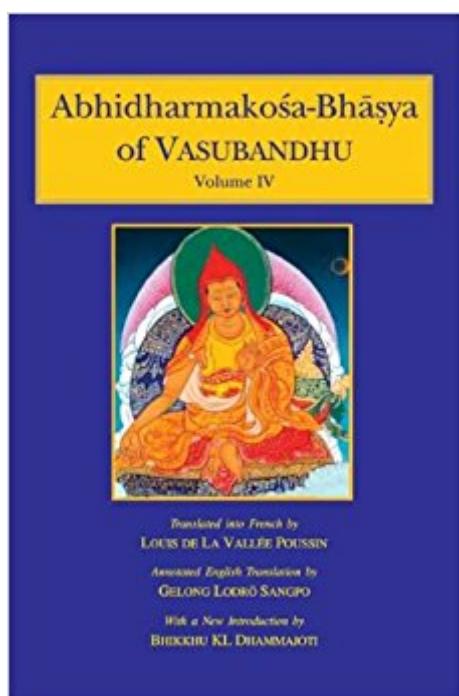


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Abhidharmakosa-Bhasya Of Vasubandhu: The Treasury Of The Abhidharma And Its Commentary (4 Vols)



Synopsis

Vasubandhu's "Abhidharmakosa-Bhasya" (ca. 380-390), besides its culminating achievement in streamlining the overall structure of the exposition of the preceding "Abhidharma" manuals, is unmatched by any of the preceding manuals in respect of its comprehensiveness - incorporating all important Vaibhasika doctrines since the time of the Abhidharma-mahavibhasa - of its excellent skill in definition and elucidation, and of its ability to clarify the difficult points involved in doctrinal disputations. Added to these qualities is its great value as a brilliant critique and insightful re-evaluation of all the fundamental Sarvastivada doctrines developed up to its time. Since its appearance, it has been used as a standard textbook for the understanding of not only the Abhidharma doctrines but all the fundamental Buddhist doctrines in general. Translated into Chinese by Paramartha in 563 A.D. and by Hsuan-tsang in 651-654 A.D., Hsuan-tsang's disciple P'u-Kuang tells us that in India the "Abhidharmakosa-Bhasya" was hailed as the "Book of Intelligence". In China, Japan and the Far-east, too, the Kosa has generally been highly treasured as a textbook of fundamental importance for Buddhist studies. Vasubandhu's brilliant critique of the doctrines of the Vaibhasika was answered by the equally brilliant Samghabhadra - a contemporary staunch defender and expounder of the doctrines of the Vaibhasikas - in his masterwork, the "Abhidharmanyayanusara", now extent only in Hsuan-tsang's translation (653-654 A.D.). The Sanskrit text, considered for a long time to be irremediably lost, was discovered by Rahula Samkrtyayana in 1935 in the Tibetan monastery of Ngor and was published by P. Pradhan in 1967 (1st edition).

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Vasubandhu (ca.350-430 A.D.) was born in Purusapura in Gandhara and is, next to Asanga (ca. 330-405 A.D.), his half brother, the most famous personage of the Yogacara school. He originally belonged to the Sravakayana school of the Sarvastivadins and had already made a name for himself through the composition of numerous treatises when he was won over to the Mahayana by Asanga, sometime in his forties. Vasubandhu counts as the great systematizer of Buddhism and is one of the six great ornaments-six great commentators of the Buddha's teaching. Even though in the Kosa Vasubandhu seems to be generally partisan to the "Hinayana"-Sautrantikas, he too was evidently open-minded, of which fact the Kosa is a testimony, and accordingly he did not seem to have become exclusively partisan to the tenets of any group as such be it those of Hinayana or Yogacara-Sautrantika or Sarvastivada.

Excellent translation work of an extremely important reference for Buddhist Abhidharma.

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