

Chapter III

‘Person’ in Vaibhāṣika School of Buddhist Philosophy

3.1 Introduction

One hundred years after the *Mahāparinibbāna* of Buddha, a schism occurred in Buddhism. This was due to the effort of a few monks who sought to relax the rigorous rules of conduct present at the time. However, the orthodox monks were in opposition and the monks who opposed them were expelled from the *Sangha*. The expelled monks gained strength gradually and convened a council in which ten thousand monks participated. It was known as *Mahāsaṅgīti* (Great Council), and divided the Buddhist *Sangha* into two schools: *Theravāda* and *Mahāsaṅghika*. “It was a division between conservative and liberal and hierarchic and the democratic.”¹ Later the *Therāvāda* was further split up into eleven sub-sects and the *Mahāsaṅghika* into seven. *Sarvāstivāda* is the branches from *Theravāda*, the most orthodox school of Buddhism. According to A. C. Banerjee, later the “Sarvāstivāda School was divided into seven sects: *Mulasarvāstivāda*, *Kāśyapiya*, *Mahisasāka*, *Dharmagupta*, *Bahuśratiya*, *Tāmasātiya* and *Vibhajjavāda*.”²

King Aśoka supported Sarvāstivāda in his later life and convened a council under the guidance of Moggalliputta Tissa, the leader of the *Therāvāda* school. The monks who subscribed to the view of the *Therāvāda* were recognized as orthodox and the rest as unorthodox. Later the unorthodox monks left Magadha and went to Gandhāra- Kashmir where they occupied a conspicuous position and subsequently came to be known as *Sarvāstivāda*. *Sarvāstivāda* flourished in Northern India stretching from Kashmir to Mathura. It was the most widely extended school in India after the *Therāvāda* school had been cut off from its Indian home.

3.2 Philosophical Background of *Sarvāstivāda*

The word *Sarvāstivāda* is composite of three words- *sarva* (all), *asti* (exist) and *vāda* (doctrine), and means ‘all exist’. It is a doctrine which advocates that all things external and internal have real existence in three phases of time: past, present and future. “*Kathāvatthu* (1.6.7) gives the meaning of *Sarvāstivāda* that everything exists everywhere, all times and in every way.”³ In *Sarvadarsanasangraha* (p-7), *Sarvāstivādins* are presented as realists, presentationalists with regard to their doctrine of perception. *Sarvāstivāda* holds that everything exists in past, present and future, so they differentiate between the existence of things actually being perceived and the existence of things that belongs to the past and future. Accordingly, *Sarvāstivāda* differentiates between *Samvṛtisat* and *Paramārthasat*. This is the distinction between the existence of the actual thing and that of thing remembered but destroyed (*Kośa*-161).

Sarvāstivāda, like other Buddhist schools, also maintains that everything is momentary. Therefore, the two theories, the momentariness of objects and *sarva-asti* (all exist) seem to be inconsistent. In fact, the *Sarvāstivāda* conceives the reality of all 72 *Dharmas*, in the limited sense of three phases of time. “These are temporal (*Addhva*), matter of usage or convention (*Kathāvastu*) in a name and form, without substance (*Sanihsāra*) and of dependent origination (*Savastuka*).”⁴ They actually hold that the present moment is the meeting point of past and future, past and future objects are only inferred, not perceived. “The present mind forms the objects from *Manovijñāna*, the awareness of consciousness. The objects which previously existed become the objects of mind, awareness (*Manodhātu*). Similarly, the future objects remain dormant, unmanifest in present state of consciousness.”⁵ Thus, for *Sarvāstivāda* the existence of *Dharmas* do not mean actual

existence of thing in three phases of time. They have only ideal existence. They exist in thought in three phases of time, but change in every moment. For this *Sarvāstivāda* distinguishes between *Samvṛtisat* and *Paramārthasat*. According to P. T. Raju, “If both are sat, this sat, which comprehends both kinds, cannot be actual but ideal. For both past and future can only be ideally reconstructed from the present and when reconstructed, affect the present also and turn it into the ideal.”⁶

After Buddha’s *Mahāparinirvāna* different schools of Buddhism were formed. All the different schools of Buddhism followed the Buddha’s teaching of *Anātmanvāda* (Non-soul theory), *Anityaṃ* (Non-permanent) and *Aniśwaratavaṃ*. They interpreted these theories with partial or complete modification, according to their own philosophical thought. The Sarvāstivāda School is claimed that they negatively interpreted Buddha’s saying viz. since Buddha did not categorically deny the existence of objects, objects exist.

For *Sarvāstivāda*, *Rūpa* is independent of mind and composite of four different kinds of atoms (*Kṣiti*, *Ap*, *Tejas* and *Vāyu*). From this stand point *Sarvāstivāda* claims to be a realist. But not a realist trend in the Western sense; realist is a philosophical doctrine puts primary emphasis on the extra-mental existence of things. Though *Sarvāstivāda* put forward that *rūpa* or matter is independent of mind and as the support of *citta*, in the *Ārupya* stage *rūpa* remains in a subtle form. And, *Jivitendriya*, a *saṃskāra*, which is material, continues even in *Ārupya* stage which is non-material.

Sarvāstivāda is also known as the Vaibhāṣika on account of its dependence on the *Vibhāṣās*, the fundamental works of the *Sarvāstivādin* School and especially the

Mahāvibhāsāstra, an encyclopedia of Buddhist Philosophy. This school maintains that everything, external as well as internal is real. *Sarvāstivāda* believed in the non-existence of soul, the impermanence of material composites, and the law of karma. For them *Nirvāna* is “the cessation of passions” (*kleśas*), which can be attained by transcendental knowledge. *Sarvāstivāda* has its own literature and interpretation and divisions of *Sūtrapitaka*, *Vinayapitaka* and *Abhidharma* texts, yet it is difficult to get a consistent view of *Sarvāstivāda* philosophy from the textual sources. The main texts for the study of *Sarvāstivāda* are Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa*, its *Bhāṣya* and *Vyākhyā* written by Yaśomitra, *Kathāvastu* and *Jñānaprasthana* of Kātyāyaniputra. Notable Vabhāsika philosophers include Vasubandhu, Dharmatrātā, Ghoṣaka, Vsumitra. Buddhdeva, Yaśomitra, Dharmasri etc.

3.3 Nature of Person

The concept of person in Buddhism is developed by denying the self, suggesting that it is a collection of aggregates. In the “Refutation of the Theory of a Self” (*Pudgalapratisedhaprakāraṇa*), Vasubandhu presents the concept of person from Vaibhāṣika viewpoint in detail and rejects Pudgalavādins⁷ theory about person. He also rejects the Tirthikas⁸ concept of self as a separate, independent, permanent object and established selfless person as a collection of aggregates.

Like other Buddhist schools *Sarvāstivāda* also denied the existence of self. They hold that only *āyatana*s exist. The self is a mere “name for a multitude of interconnected facts, which Buddhistic Philosophy is attempting to analyze by reducing them to real elements (*dharmas*).”⁹ It is only an idea (*viññaptisat*), that compound of *skandhas* and has no

reality apart from them. Answering the question of King Milinda, Nāgasena said that as a chariot without its parts is nothing, likewise the self is nothing apart from the skandhas. Thus, the general tendency of the *Anātmavāda* is to say that it is nothing more than its parts. But without self, transmigration and analysis of rebirth seems to be contradicted. Is the enjoyment of karma possible, if the soul is a group of elements which are changing every moment? “Nāgasena replies that the soul which is said to be newly born to enjoy past karma is neither the new nor the old, just as the flame of a lamp lighted from the flame of another lamp is not merely the latter and yet is not different from it (*Kośa*-p.15).”¹⁰

3.3.1 Refutation of the Self Theory Presented by Tirthikas

In all Indian Buddhist philosophical schools four main theses are accepted, the impermanent thesis, all contaminated phenomena constitute suffering, the cessation thesis (*Nirvāna*)-cessation of all suffering and the rebirth and the selfless thesis (*anātman*). Like all other Indian Buddhist Schools Vaibhāṣika believes that all phenomena are selfless. For them, no phenomena is a self or in possession of a self. If self is conceived as a person, it has to be independently identified, but Vaibhāṣika holds that nothing exists apart from the aggregates. Thus they maintain the concept of person without self. In “Refutation of the Theory of a Self”, Vasubandhu rejects the concept of person presented by Tirthikas. Vasubandhu responded to various views and objections put forwarded by Tirthikas with proper justification and established his view of the selfless person.

Two selfless person theories are accepted in Indian Buddhist philosophical schools. According to the first, persons are other than the collection of aggregates. “Tirthikas claims that we are a separate substance, and causally unconditioned, permanent and partless.”¹¹ The second interpretation is that persons do not possess any attributes apart from being conceived in dependence upon collection of aggregates. Vasubandhu said that persons do not possess any attributes which may be conceived independent from the collection of aggregates. When we conceive our self, we naturally appear to be independently identifiable. This is the root cause of suffering. But when we investigate, we find that we cannot be identified, except in relation to these phenomena. So, according to Vasubandhu, “the realization of our selflessness in the no independent identifiability sense is the chief means by which we become free from the suffering.”¹²

Against the non-self theory of Vasubandhu, the Tirthikas raise several objections. According to Nyāya-Viaśeṣika, the self is permanent, substance and immaterial. Consciousness is its accidental and adventitious quality. Nyāya-Viaśeṣika holds that without *ātman*, desire, aversion, volition, knowledge, ethical responsibility, etc. cannot be explained. It is the *ātman* that controls and guides the mind, senses and the process of consciousness. Self is independently identifiable and owner or possessor of mental activities. So memory, consciousness and other mental activities, and their results, according Tirthikas, cannot be explained without self. In section 4 of ‘Refutation’, Vasubandhu considers different views and arguments of Tirthikas regarding self and has given counter explanation.

Vasubandhu rejects the existence of self on the basis that direct perception and correct inference cannot establish existence of self (RTS 1.2). For him, direct perception and

correct inference are the only means that prove the existence of any phenomena. He uses ‘self’ to refer to a person who can be identified independently of the aggregates. It means self is a continuum of aggregates and nothing else. So person can be substituted for self. For him, person, which is conventional reality, refers to the continuum of aggregates, rather than to a self.

Tirthikas admit self as an independent substance, and raise the question, if self does not exist, how does the memory of an object occur? Vasubandhu denied the existence of self due to the memory of an object. He replied that an object is remembered because immediately before the memory occurs a special kind of mind arises that is connected to the discrimination of the object to be remembered (RTS 4.1). Thus this special kind of mind is inclined towards the object to be remembered. “A memory is produced by this special kind of mind when it is (causally) connected to discrimination of the object.”¹³ Again Tirthikas asks, if self does not exist who remembered? Vasubandhu replied, the special kind of mind *Caitra* remembers.

In section 4.4 of Refutation, Tirthikas claims that the consciousness of an activity exists in dependence upon self, as every activity exists in dependence upon agent. For instance, walking is an activity, which exists in dependence upon Devadatta (agent), a walker. So consciousness is an activity, exists in dependence upon self. What apprehends must exist. “The claim is made that since an activity signified by an active verb exists in dependence upon an agent signified by a noun to which the active verb is attached, and apprehending an object is an activity signified by a active verb, there must be an agent responsible for the activity of apprehending an object. This agent is the self.”¹⁴

However, Vasubandhu said their assumption that there is an agent to apprehending an object failed to establish self in Devadatta. They are assuming that he is self, yet he is not just one thing, rather a collection of causally conditioning phenomena to which this name, Devadatta, has been given. So it is not self, but a collection of aggregates, that we refer to when we say that Devadatta moves or apprehends (RTS 4.4.1).

In some *Sūtras* it is said that consciousness apprehends objects. But how is this possible with self? In apprehending an object, consciousness actually does nothing. As in the cause-effect relationship the effect does nothing, it owes its form to the cause. Likewise, consciousness, even though it does nothing, apprehends objects because it receives a form like that of its cause (RTS 4.6).

Tirthikas conceive mental attributes, like memory and other form of cognition as needing a substance in which they inhere. This substance is not other than self. Self is the underlying support of various mental attributes. Vasubandhu states that all phenomena are substance. Here he mentions six kinds: five uncontaminated aggregates and *Nirvāna*. But no one has proven that memory and other cognitions are in a substance (self) (RTS 4.8), so he rejects the underlying support of them. Tirthikas also conceives the self as the underlying support of feeling, pleasure and pain. According to Vasubandhu, the underlying support of feelings are the six bases of perception; the six organs of perception. They emerge from the six internal bases of cognition in the way that flowers come to be on a tree and fruits come to be in a garden (RTS 4.11).

Performing action and fruits of action are dependent, according to Tirthikas on the self. Self is conceived as the agent of action and the subject that experiences the fruits of

action. Without the self there is no reason to undertake an action (RTS 4.9). The agent is independent in relation to various effects e.g. bathing, eating, walking, and so on (RTS 4.12). Vasubandhu agrees that action is undertaken by reason. But the 'I' for whose sake an action is undertaken is known to be the same in existence as a collection of aggregates. If agent is required for action, with the same argument, Vasubandhu argues that the five aggregates, not the self, become agent (RTS .12.1).

Vasubandhu states that there is no causally independent cause of action. There are three kinds of action according to the effect of body, speech and mind. But they are depending upon one another. An action of body or speech arises in dependence upon action of mind, which is dependence upon another mind (a prior mind). So, all actions are aroused in dependence upon causal conditions. There is no independent cause (self). Vasubandhu objects the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view that a causally independent self can be the cause of actions. Finally, he argued that if there is an action that causes action, that agent is not a self, since a self is not found by perception to exist among their causes.¹⁵ A self does nothing in producing an action. Vasubandhu illustrates how an action of body or speech arises without a self. From the memory of an object, a desire (to obtain the object) arises. From this desire, in turn arises a consideration to satisfy the desire, and from this consideration arises an effort of the mind to move the body for satisfying the desire. This effort causes a movement in the wind channels, which in turn causes the bodily action (RTS 4.12.1).

In response to the objection of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Vasubandhu denies the existence of self as a subject that experiences the results of action. He asks what the experience of the result of action consists of. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika replies that the self does not really

suffer, that it exists in the perception of physical pain in the body by a self. Vasubandhu rejects this in his previous argument (RTS-4.3) “that a self cannot be a perceiver, since to be a perceiver it must own or possess a consciousness by means of which it perceives the result of action.”¹⁶ He has already rejected the view that self possesses consciousness, memory etc.

In section 4.13 the Tirthikas claim that if there is no self it cannot be explained why a being outside of *samsāra* does not accumulate merit and demerit in the way in which being in *samsāra* does. Vasubandhu’s reply is that beings outside of *samsāra* do not accumulate merit and demerit because they lack the underlying support for the feeling that results from the accumulation of merit and demerit. For him, the underlying support is not self, but the six internal bases of perception.

Tirthikas asks how if there is no self, an action produced results in a future that does not exist? Vasubandhu’s counter question was how, if there is a self, can an action that no longer exists produce a result in the future? They reply that an action produces result, because the self is the underlying support of merit and demerit of action. But it is rejected by Vasubandhu, he says that the self cannot be the underlying support of merit and demerit of action. Action that exists no longer cannot produce results in the future. A result arises from an action because of a special development in the continuum of action. It is in the way a fruit arises from a seed. This continuum is the occurrence of a sequence of mind that arises from prior action, and a development in it is the production mind of a different in character from moment to moment (RTS 4.14).

Buddhism explains rebirth without accepting the existence of self. “According to standard Buddhist view, an action whose result does not arise in the same life can have anyone of the different kind of results: the kind of rebirth a person may have, the kind of suffering a person may have in a rebirth, or the kind of circumstance in which a person is found in a rebirth.”¹⁷ According to Vasubandhu, a special kind of development in mind occurred at the time of death; the causal continuum produced by an action that produces a rebirth. It may be called the rebirth producing mind. Three kinds of actions are believed by Vasubandhu which have the most power to produce rebirth-producing mind: weighty, the recent and the habitual. An action performed close to the time of death has greater power than an action performed in earlier life with regards to the rebirth producing mind. A habitually performed action has more power to influence the rebirth-producing mind than an action not habitually performed at the time of death. Vasubandhu said that an action loses its power after producing rebirth (RTS 4.14).

Vasubandhu rejects the *Pudgalavādins* concept that a person is the self and said that, if so there is no liberation from suffering even for Buddha (RTS 3.9). Because Buddha said that we suffer due to mistaken view that arises from the collection of impermanent aggregates. This mistaken view accepts the false appearance that we are selves and of our aggregates as possessed by selves.

3.3.2 Person as Conventional Reality

Person is a living being which we can refer to as a being and ascribe some attributes. All Indian Buddhist philosophical schools agree that the concept of person is the combination of two components: a referential component and a descriptive component.

James Darlinger describes, “The conception of a person is the conception of an object (a) to which we refer when we use the first person singular pronoun to refer, and (b) of which we say, by convention, that it possesses as parts a body and mind that enable us to perceive objects, think about them, have feelings when they are perceived or thought about, perform actions for the sake of acquiring or avoiding them etc.”¹⁸ Thus, person is that which we refer to as a living being with some special attributes ascribed to him. Vasubandhu asserts that the reference of person is the same as the collection of aggregates and ultimately exists. But *Pudgalavādin* and Candrakirti deny this. The conception of person refers to conception of ourselves; when a person is conceived it means we conceive ourselves as a person.

In *Abhidharmakośa*, two realities are described: Conventional realities (*Samvṛtisatya-s*) and Ultimate realities (*Paramārthasatya-s*), under which all phenomena known to exist are included. These two realities are characterized as two ways in which objects known to exist possess reality. “An object of knowledge is conventional reality just in case it is no longer conceived to be what it is conceived to be if analyzed or broken into parts. That a conventional reality is an object of knowledge that does not possess an identity by itself.”¹⁹ Furthermore, the ultimate reality is an object of knowledge whose identity is retained if analyzed or broken into parts. That is, it is a substantially real phenomenon and has an identity apart from being conceived. Vasubandhu maintains that the aggregates and four elements are substances (RTS 4.8, 2.1.5) and are ultimate realities. In the pursuit of *Nirvāna*, all schools rely upon both conventional and ultimate realities. Buddha taught his disciples to rely upon conventional realities in their practice of morality, because it is important for the purpose of explaining the problem of suffering

and how to solve it. “We are to rely on ultimate realities in the practice of wisdom on the path in so far as direct yogic perception of ultimate realities is the means by which we can effectively eliminate the mistaken view of self, which is the root cause of suffering in *saṃsāra*.”²⁰

According to Vasubandhu, person is formed with dependence upon collection of aggregates, and is therefore of conventional reality. The collections of aggregates are the causal basis which we are dependent upon. Though Vaibhāṣika, like other schools of Buddhism, accepts momentariness of objects, yet it maintains the existence of the same person in three phases of time. Accordingly, only the aggregates are different in three phases of time i.e. present, past and future, on the basis of which persons are referred. They are “(a) all of the aggregates present at the moment we are referring ourselves, (b) these same aggregates along with previous aggregates in the causal continuum of aggregates of which the present aggregates are a part, and (c) these are aggregates, along with future aggregates in the causal continuum of aggregates of which the present aggregates are part.”²¹

Vasubandhu argues that though the existence of person is dependent upon aggregates, yet it has ultimate existence. But how is it possible? For it we can refer the ontology of person thesis. This is the thesis on the basis of which we can understand Vasubandhu’s meaning, as he claims that we are collection of aggregates and at the same time to say that we are ‘real by a way of conception’ (*prajñaptisat*) (RTS 2.1). Vasubandhu from the Vaibhāṣika point of view holds that all phenomena are either ‘substantially real’ (*dravyasat*) or possess a reality that is ‘substantially established’ (*dravyasidha*).

Vaibhāṣikas draw a distinction between the substantially real (*dravyasat*) and substance (*dravya*). According to James Darlinger “(1) substantially real phenomena are phenomena that possess nature of their own by virtue of which they exist and can be identified independently one another, (2) that substances and inseparable combination of substances are substantially real phenomena, (3) that substances are the basic kind of phenomena that exist, and (4) that among substances, those that are causally conditioned exist in separable combination with others, and those that are causally unconditioned do not.”²² The Vaibhāṣika conceives 72 causally conditioned phenomena and three causally unconditioned phenomena under substance.

Person is a phenomenon that possesses a substantially established reality. “Substantially established reality are entities that process mental constructed identities and yet possess ultimate existence by reason of possessing as extrinsic parts different kind of substances independent upon which their identity is constructed.”²³ Thus, person as a collection of aggregates implies that it possesses a substantially established reality. That is to say, we are the same in existence as the collection of aggregates whose dependence upon which we are conceived. The collection of aggregates possesses ultimate reality, which exists independent of being conceived. Hence, for Vasubandhu, we ultimately exist in spite of dependence upon our aggregates.

3.3.3 Person and Aggregates

Vasubandhu, from the Vaibhāṣika point of view, developed a selfless concept of person which is a collection of aggregates. That person is not a distinct entity, but a collection of aggregates. Person, according to Vasubandhu, is not substantially real, but real by way of

conception. The substantially real (*dravyataḥ asti*) or ultimate reality is that whose identity cannot be eliminated by analysis. And ‘real by way of conception’ (*prajñaptitaḥ asti*), or conventional reality, is that whose identity can be eliminated by analysis. “Nonetheless, what is real by way of conception ultimately exists, since it is the same in existence as a collection of substances upon which it is conceived.”²⁴ Vasubandhu argues that if we are substantially real then we are other than aggregates and will possess a different nature than those possessed by aggregates.

Pudgalavādins hold that the person is neither substantially real nor real by way of conception because person is reliant upon a collection of aggregates (RTS 2.1.1). But, if person is conceived as reliant upon aggregates then this person would be same in existence as the collection. *Pudgalavādins* say that person is neither same nor different from aggregates as in fire and fuel relationship where fire and fuel are not different from each other since fire is conceived as reliant upon fuel. Vasubandhu rejects the fire-fuel analogy of *Pudgalavādin* and argues that fire and fuel are composed of eight substances and fire arises in dependence upon fuel as curd arises in dependence upon milk. So fire is different from fuel, though its rise is dependent upon fuel. Likewise, a person is different from its collection of aggregates though its aroused is dependent upon aggregates (RTS 2.1.5).

The aggregates are the causal basis of the conception of person. Persons are, from a conventional point of view, whole made of parts. But here the parts are identifiable independently of the whole; the whole themselves are not independently identifiable of the parts. According to Vasubandhu, the aggregates exist in a beginningless causal continuum perpetuated by the mistaken view of self. When we conceive ourselves, we

falsely conceive that whole are independently identifiable of our parts and parts are identifiable in dependence upon whole. It assumes the false appearance of first 'I' and second 'mine'. Together this is called "the mistaken view arising from a perishable collection of aggregates" (*Satkāyadr̥ṣṭi*). In this collection of phenomena nothing is found besides the aggregates, so he concludes, we are not self.

As a conventional reality, a person is a collection of acquired aggregates. Vasubandhu assumes that aggregates are acquired by a person in convention. Accordingly, the attributes of aggregates are ascribed to the person. The function of aggregates are described by Darlinger as follow: "In general, when we take into account the function performed by the aggregates of a person, the implication is that the descriptive content of the conception of a person is that of being an owner or possessor of aggregates who acquires different aggregates moment by moment, and by reason of possessing them is said, e.g., to perceive objects, since consciousness does so, and to walk, since the leg of a person does so, etc."²⁵

Vasubandhu holds that our functions are dependent upon the performance of our aggregates. "For instance, consciousness present within the collection of object and we are not other than these consciousness, by convention we can say that we perceive objects and that we are perceivers of object."²⁶ In performing the function of different aggregates, a person possesses an identity not possessed by any of aggregates. This is the result of all aggregates work together.

Vasubandhu concludes his theory of person by saying that a person is real by way of conception, and yet it is a collection of aggregates. This is the middle way according to

him, between two extreme groups. One is the *Pudgalavādins*, who claim that we are other than collection of aggregates. We ultimately exist without being the same in existence as a collection of aggregates. The other is Nāgārjuna's nihilistic view that nothing exists. For Nāgārjuna, not only are persons non-existent, but even the collection of aggregates upon which persons are dependent does not ultimately exist. Thus, Vasubandhu's conception of person is the middle way among two theories of person as he claims that we can be both independently identified and that we do not exist at all.

3.4 Constituents of 'Person'

In Buddhism, the second Noble Truth (*Aryan Satya*) explains the cause of the world, which is misery. There are twelve links in the process of the causation of the world. How man comes into being is explained in Buddhism as "By impression, the Buddhists mean inner forces, instincts, latent urges, dispositions etc. out of these impressions an embryonic consciousness is born, called *vijñāna*; out of it the embryonic organism (body-mind) is born; out of it six senses ; and out of them sense contact is born and so on."²⁷ Regarding the constituents of man, according to all schools of Buddhism he is essentially *Nirvāna*. Person is a psycho-physical organism, which is formed somehow through ignorance. The psycho-physical personality consists of five aggregates, or *skandhas*.

Person is constituted by the five *Skandhas*, the twelve *Āyatanas* and eighteen *Dhātus*; all of these include in *dharma*. *Āyatanas* are the bases of our cognition and field of our activities. It includes the five bases of senses (*indriyātanas*), the corresponding five bases of object (*viśayātanas*), the bases of mind (*mana-indriyātana*) and the bases of non-

sensuous objects (*dharmāyatana*). This *dharmadhātu*, according to Vasubandhu, is substantial and commentary describes it as the essence and eternal, it is true as an entity and it alone exist (*Kośa* p-16).²⁸

Dhātus are those elements that constitute our personality. The eighteen *dhātus* are- the twelve *Āyatanas*, the five sense organs and the *Manovijñāna*. Thus *dhātu* includes the six senses, including mind, the six *vijñanas* including *manovijñāna*, the *dharma dhātu* and the five sense objects.

3.4.1 Dharma

According to *Sarvāstivāda*, *dharma* means the Real, which is temporal in nature and subject to time. It exists in present but is the meeting point of past and future. In *Abhidharmakośa* (p-2) *dharma* is defined as *avabodhopayoginah padārtha*; the entity which is useful for understanding. Like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika Philosophy, which called everything *padārtha*, *Sarvāstivāda* holds that everything is *dharma*. The world (*Loka*) and its objects are combinations of *dharmas* which combine into matter (*Rūpa*) and mind (*Citta*), the personality phenomenon (*puḍgala*). *Dharmas* are not permanent like things-in-themselves in Kantian sense; it is like the hypothetical real in present day science.²⁹ *Dharmas* are both external and mental, for *Sarvāstivāda* all things, external and mental find their place in *dharmas*. Buddha also maintained that all things are reducible to *dharma* or subtle existence.

All *dharmas* are divided into two categories viz. pure (*Anāsrva*) and impure (*Sāsrva*). The three unconstituted (*Asaṃskṛta*) *dharmas* are called pure *dharma*. They are *Ākāśa* (*Anāvṛti*), *Pratisaṃkhyā Nirodha*, and *Apratisaṃkhyā Nirodha*. Except *Mārgastya*, all

constituted objects are impure (*Sāsrva*). The phenomenal world is made up of 72 items of *saṃskṛta dharmas*. The *saṃskṛta dharmas* are natural by nature, they become impure when they form a constituted being (*pudgala*). They are courses of suffering and subject to suffering. They are equated with the world of existence (*bhava*), the bases of wrong views (*dr̥ṣṭisthānaṃ*) and birth (*janṃa*). The 72 *Saṃskṛta dharmas* are classified under four different categories-(a) *Rūpa* (matter) 11 items, (b) *Citta* (mind), (c) *Caitta* or *Cittasamprayukta* (mind derivatives) 46 items and (d) *Citta Viprayukta* (mind dissociated) 14 items.

3.4.2 Skandhas

Abhidharmakośa interpreted *skandhas* as *Rāśi* (collection). There are five *skandhas* and all 72 *saṃskṛta dharmas* are constituted of the five *skandhas*.

1. *Rūpa Skandha* (The matter formation)
2. *Vedanā Skandha* (The feeling composition)
3. *Samjñā Skandha* (The perception formation)
4. *Saṃskāra Skandha* (The impression formation)
5. *Vijñāna Skandha* (The conscious formation)

3.4.2.1 Rūpa Skandha

Rūpa is combination of the four ultimate properties, water, air, fire and earth, and their special characteristics are humidity, motion, heat and hardness respectively. These ultimate properties are characterized by collection (*Samgraha*), motion (*Vyūhan*),

maturation (*Pāka*) and capacity to bear (*Dhṛti*). In a wider sense, *Rūpa Skandha* attributes the combination of all external objects to mind or citta. In a limited sense it denotes all the matter items which are visible. The five sense organs, the faculties of male and female organs and the faculty of vitality are the different constituted form of *Rūpa* or matter. In the Buddhists view, “*rūpa* is something which is resistible (*Spratgha*) or obstructing in nature and also as the support of mind, both in manifest and subtle form. Thus, it is difficult to maintain a clear cut separation of *Rūpa*, or matter, and *Citta*, or mind, in Buddhist Psychology; they are inseparably harnessed together in both knowing and being.”³⁰

As a realistic trend, for *Sarvāstivāda rūpa* or matter has an independent existence from mind and consciousness. The component of *rūpa* consists of four different kinds of atoms (*paramānu*) i.e. *Kṣiti* (earth atom), *Ap* (water atom), *Tejas* (fire atom) and *Vāyu* (air atom). However, they hold that objects are momentary in nature. Thus, *Sarvāstivāda* offers an apparently contradictory view, as they accept both the real existence of objects as well as their momentariness. But they clarify this by saying that although objects are momentary, but the *dharmas*, which are their components, are real for three phases of time.

The five sense organs, their five respective fields and *Avijñapti* constitute *Rūpa Skandha*. It is the composition of all matters including both, the concrete or manifest (*Prasāda Rūpa*) and subtle (*Sūkṣma*) items. *Rūpas* have different variation according to their colour and form. *Rūpa* items are long, short, round, circular, high, low, wide and very wide. *Rūpa* items have different colours red, blue, yellow, white, and other colour like, smoke, dust, mist, shadow, sun, light and darkness. It has 8 kinds of sounds, 6 kinds of

tastes (sweet, sour, saline, bitter, astringent and pungent) and 4 kinds of smell viz. good, bad, strong and mild. “*Rūpa* objects are known as *Sparastavay* due to its ultimate properties of water, air, fire and earth and seven kinds of constituted objects: which are smoothness, roughness, heaviness, lightness, coldness, hunger and thirst.”³¹

Avijñapti is unmanifested *dharma*, which is not the cause of the *Mahābhūtas* and is a continuous stream. The *avijñapti* is non-mentaux in nature, originates in *rūpa* and is devoid of consciousness. “In all sense-act, whenever an act is performed an idea is impressed; a latent energy is impressed in our person which is designated as *avijñapti rūpa*.”³² It is *rūpa* because it is the result of *rūpa* contact and because it is latent and unconscious, it is called *avijñapti*.

In *Kośa* it is defined: “*Avijñapti karma* is a product of *rūpa-karma* just as *vijñapti-karma* is. It derives its name from the fact that it does not manifest itself to others and cannot be known by others.”³³ It signifies a karmic entry which is not perceived by the five senses or made known to another. According to *Sarvāstivāda*, when we perform an act and express an idea as good or bad it is called *vijñapti-rūpa* or ‘action made known’. “But a latent energy is impressed on our person, which is designated as *avijñapti-rūpa* or ‘action not made known’ because it does not manifest itself to others but remains hidden in the person of the door.”³⁴ It is quite unconscious or subconscious. It is as a latent energy bound with karmic effect; it is the only bridge which connects the cause and the effect of karma, good or bad, done by the body or speech.

3.4.2.2 *Vedanā Skandha*

Vedanā or feeling is produced by the connection of particular sense organs with their corresponding objects. “Feeling is manifest in a localized part of the body, but it is not spatial.”³⁵ We have six senses, including mind, and accordingly six different feelings roused by means of different sense organs.

1. Feelings that arise out of eye contact (*Cakṣu-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)
2. Feelings that arise out of ear contact (*Śrota-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)
3. Feelings that arise out of nose contact (*Ghrāna-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)
4. Feelings that arise out of tongue contact (*Jihvā-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)
5. Feelings that arise out of body contact (*Kāya-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)
6. Feelings that arise out of mind contact (*Mana-Saṃsparśaja Vedanā*)

Feeling or *vedanā* is a biological phenomena which may be either bodily (*Kāyiki*) or mental. It indicates *upabhuoga* (enjoyment), *anubhava* (affection) and *vritti* (experience).

3.4.2.3 *Samjñā Skandha*

Samjñā is a meaningful sensation which differentiates the character of objects. It is like the determinate perception of Naiyāyika. “*Samjñā* may be also understood as *Caitta* or mental derivative present in the basic mind or *Mahābhūmika citta*.”³⁶ It is universal. *Samjñā* is the grouping of data or sensation, so it precedes *Vijñāna* (sensation). The function of *Samjñā* is to channelizing of particular name and form together. It is subtle stage of mind and is found in the *Ārūpya* non-corporal sphere. It is also six kinds: *Cakṣu-*

Samjñākāya (Visual perception) *Śrota-Samjñākāya* (Auditory perception), *Ghrāna-Samjñākāya*, (Olfactory perception), *Jihvā-Samjñākāya* (Gustatory perception), *Kāya-Samjñākāya* (Tactile perception) and *Mana-Samjñākāya* (Mental perception).

The Buddhist concept of *Samjñā* indicates the determination or interpretation of sensation; it is a presentative–representative process which combines the different items of memory, imagination, recognition, comparison, discernment and symbolic expression.

In visual perception, eye contact with an object produces *Caksuvijñāna* (visual consciousness). Then it is transformed into the mind element, or *Manodhātu*. This past content or *Manodhātu* now acts as the stimulus for the present mind. The resultant consciousness is mind consciousness or *Manovijñāna*, which is preceded by *Manosamjñā*. (*Bhāsyam* p.11, *Kośa* 1, Kā 17). Thus *Samjñā* is pre-cognitive stage and followed by *Vijñāna* (cognition). Then *Samjñā* proceeds as a reflecting phase of mind. It consists of selecting and organizing process like past consciousness (*smṛti*), image (*rūpa Samjñā*), recognition (*Samjñā* comparison), examination (*vitarka*), discernment (*vicāra*), Judgment (*vinīscaya*), relationing (*saṃbandha*), symbolic expression, and communicated awareness (*vijñapti*).³⁷

Samjñā also presents the relational and symbolic mode of thought. Because it is a determining process, it includes the symbolic and relational nature of thought expressed as *Sabdagrahana*, *Arthagrahan*, *Nāmagrahana* and *Saṅketa* (symbol). Another phase of *Samjñā* is the communication of awareness. This is ‘grasping the sign’. It indicates that the perception of an object may also be communicated through the organism to the

individual and others. Thus *Samjñā* or perception has three representational aspects: first the selection, second reflection and third expression (*vijñapti*).

3.4.2.4 *Vijñāna Skandha*

The entire formation of mind and its functions are presented in *Vijñāna Skandha*. It is called *Mana Āyatana* (total mind's field). In a limited sense it indicates the sensations of six organs, but in the wider sense it covers the whole range of consciousness and its aspects. It is of seven kinds: *Caksu-Vijñāna* (Eye consciousness), *Śrotra-Vijñāna* (Ear consciousness), *Ghrāna-Vijñāna* (Olfactory consciousness), *Jihvā-Vijñāna* (Gustatory consciousness), *Kāya-Vijñāna* (Body-consciousness), *Mano-Vijñāna* (Mind consciousness) and *Mano-Dhātu* (Mind potential).

The *Vijñāna Skandha* can be analyzed under four headings.

1. *Vijñāna* (Consciousness)
2. *Mana* (Reason-reflexion)
3. *Citta* (Conscious moral state)
4. *Mana-Indriya* (Faculty of mind)

3.4.2.4.1 *Vijñāna* or Consciousness

Consciousness or *Vijñāna (Āśrita dhātu)* is a complex mental function that is produced by the contact of sense organs (*Ālambana dhātu*) and their respective objects (*Āśraya dhātu*). It is an instantaneous physiological reaction to the external object. The contact of an object with one of the senses produces a special sensation, which in turn becomes the

object of mind and produces mind consciousness. Like modern psychology, *Sarvāstivāda* maintains that all the five sense organs are known by their respective sensations and mind consciousness (*Manovijñāna*). So cognition means the relation between mind consciousness and five sensations. “It seems that, from the Buddhist point *vijñāna* has been used in two different meaning, it is *prativijñāpti* or reaction to object and cognition of object.”³⁸

Particular sensations obtained by the particular sense faculties and cognized by *Manovijñāna* is common for cognizing all sensations. This shows the dynamic nature of consciousness where two processes are present: sensation and understanding. First, the sensation is produced by the interconnection of senses and objects and then the mind as a whole cognizes the object by applying its reflections. “Sensation immediately followed by its feeling tone (*Vedanā*) and becomes cognized as a whole (*Samjñā*), the process is experienced repeatedly till it is pushed into impression or *Samkāra*.”³⁹

Sensation or *Vijñāna* is inherently located in the sense faculties. Sense-faculties are the seat of their respective sensations and internal in nature. These sense faculties are constituted of *Bhūtas* (ultimate particles) and are incited by manifest *Rūpa* (*Rūpa prasada*). This double nature of sense faculties demonstrates the subject-object relation of Buddhist epistemology. The sense faculties have different functioning capacities i.e. *Mṛdu* (dull), *Madhya* (medium), and *Tikṣṇa* (sharp). “It is said that the nature and intensity of sensations vary in accordance with the nature and intensity of sense faculties (*Kośa*- 1 Kā-44). Thus the nature of knowledge is more directly dependent on the sense faculties than on the respective stimuli or objects.”⁴⁰ This implies that knowledge of the

same thing will differ from person to person because the sense faculties of each person differ in nature and intensity.

Abhidharmakośa explains the relation of *Vijñāna*, *Mana* (mind) and *Manovijñāna* (mind consciousness). *Vijñāna*, or sensation, results from the contact between an external object and one of the senses. Then mind cognizes all sensations as a whole. These objects and respective sensations are presentative. But when this moment passes, they become past object. This past content is the *Manodhātu*, which now becomes the object of *Manovijñāna*. Thus, the mind takes the support of past sensations in order to cognize an object. Using this unique explanation, *Sarvāstivāda* explained the continual existence of *dharmas* in three phases of time. “The sensation of the past mind and mind awareness of the past sensations together may be known by *Manovijñāna*.”⁴¹

3.4.2.4.2 *Manodhātu* (Mind or Reflection)

In *Kośa*, mind (*Manas*) is described as a mental function, which is immediately proceeded by the sensations. Mind is not totally different from sensation. Consciousness and mind are relative concepts. The same person may be father and son in different relations, likewise the sensation is consciousness in a present object. “The Mind or *Manodhātu* stands for the past contents which function as the object (*Ālambana*) of *Mano-vijñāna* (mind consciousness).”⁴² *Manodhātu* is presentative-representative in nature and deals with *Smṛti* (memory). It is reflecting (*Vikalpa*), investigating (*Savitarka*) and discerning (*Savicāra*). Mind is not made up (*Anupātta*) and becomes *Savitarka*, *Savicāra* and *Avitarka* in different level of meditation. It is continuous (*Naiḥśyandika*)

and resultant (*Vipākaja*) of previous thought. *Manodhātu* is momentary and devoid of objects.

3.4.2.4.3 *Manovijñāna* (Mind Consciousness)

Manovijñāna (mind consciousness) is always associated with *Prajñā* (knowledge) and *Savitarka* (investigating), *Savicāra* (discerning) and *Avitarka* (uninvestigating) in nature. It is impure and found in non-corporeal sphere (*Ārūpya Dhātu*). The object of *Manovijñāna* is *Manadhātu* or the mind element. The five sensations are determined by their respective objects, while the object of *Manovijñāna* is not determined, it is infinite. The five sense objects are known by their respective sensations, which in turn become the objects of mind consciousness. The objects of mind consciousness are so varied that it is known by the term ‘*dharma dhātu*’. *Dharmadhātu* is non-sensuous and it is only known by mind consciousness. In sensation, *Mano-vijñāna* (mind consciousness) plays an important role. The respective object is known by the respective organ, which in turn become the object of mind consciousness. Each of the particular faculties does its respective functions in relation to the respective object, but mind in general cognizes all.

3.4.2.4.4 *Citta* (Consciousness in General)

In the *Kośa*, *Citta* is explained as the entire world of consciousness expressed in various patterns of function. It functions as the selecting process of good and ethically wholesome and unwholesome. Mind is the object of the *Citta*, as it functions as the reflecting element of thought. Sensations are produced in the sense faculties. The entire extent of *Citta* is indicated by the term *Mana āyatana*. It may be both pure (*Anasārva*) and impure (*Sāsarva*). *Citta* remains at all times from birth to death and continuous until

the achievement of *Prajñā*. Both *Anāsarva Prajñā* and *Sāsarva Mana* are included in *Citta* and it is identified with the internal principle. As an internal factor, *Citta* associates with *Vedanā*, *Samjñā* and *Samskāra*.

In the process of consciousness, the *Citta* becomes *Caitta* (Mental derivation) through association with (a) *Āśraya* (locus, sense faculty), (b) *Ālambana* (objects), (c) *Ākāra* (shape and size), (d) *Kāla* (temporality), and (e) *Dravya-samatā* (uniformity in objectification) (Kośa-2 Kā 34). In the process of consciousness, first a contact occurs with sense organs and an external object, then the shape and size are understood in temporal reference and lastly objectivity is understood.

The whole process is described as follows in the *Kośa*: “The sense organs are activated by externals and a contact follows between them and the external materials (*Rūpa*). This stage is followed by some state of feeling (*Vedanā*), which leads to perception or conceptualization (*Samjñā*). The whole process then is formed into a complex function of consciousness (*Vijñāna*). This state of consciousness is pushed later into the field of associations or impressions (*Samskāra*).”⁴³

3.4.2.4.5 Continuity of *Citta*

Citta or consciousness is conceived as the continuum stream in the midst of all variable forces and all the cycles of life and death. As *Kośa* describes “*vijñāna* cause of birth (*Janama Niśraya*) and dominates over rebirth (*Punarbhava Saṃbandha*)”. It flows all succession of life and the process of becoming (*Bhavanga Citta*). *Citta*, or consciousness is only stopped after attaining *Nirvāna* by an individual. In its flow “it undergoes various phases of complexity occurring in terms of sensation, feeling, perception, modalised

consciousness and various impressions during the period of so called continuity.”⁴⁴ In our sleeping and unconscious states *citta* also present. It is also present in *Samāpatti* (state of spiritualization), which is technically known as *Niṣkrānta* and *Nirodha* state. In these two stages the individuals are devoid of any modalization of consciousness, but are not devoid of existence.

According to *Kośa*, birth and death are characterized by their own specific features of consciousness, which are known as *Upapatti-bhava Citta* (birth consciousness) and *Cyuti-citta* (death consciousness). The *Cyuti-Vijñāna* is inferred from the pain of ordinary people and serenity of holy person at the time of death. In an individual, at the time of death, consciousness remains dull, or *Mṛdu*, and is associated with *Upeksha* (no-pleasure, no-pain). The habitual experience, previous experience, impurities and morally wholesome virtues of an individual are spontaneously repeated in this stage. Thus, the death consciousness (*Marana-bhava Citta*) reflects of the previous existence (*Pūrvakālabhava citta*). “When all the other conditions are matured, this death consciousness is transplanted into *Pratisaṃdhivijñāna*, which functions as a link between the *Maranabhavacitta* and *Upapattibhava citta* (Consciousness at next birth).”⁴⁵

3.4.2.4.6 The Process of Consciousness

The process of consciousness is described as *citta-vithi*, or canalized consciousness. *Citta- vithi* is the arrest of the free flowing continuum of a being, or *Bhavanga-Citta*, by some object. *Bhavanga-citta* is the pure thought and indicates a primary and unmodified function of consciousness. It is the same with the *Ālaya-Vijñāna* of the *Yogācāra* School.

So in the conscious process, the object becomes attached with the being and modifies the being (*bhavanga*) into an object directed consciousness.

The presentation of an object is produced by the disturbance in the free flow of *bhavanga* which is technically known as *Bhavanga-Cālanā*, or string of consciousness. This step is followed by the initial consciousness of *Citta-Praspanda*, or the psychic step of inception. This primary phase of consciousness is to be known as ‘Minding’ or *Manodvārāvarjana*. After reaching this stage, *Bhavanga* becomes the past in relation to the present thought moment. The thought moment is further modified by five doors of cognition (*Pancadwārāvarjana*), i.e. visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile. Here the thought process is modified by one or more sensations. “The receiving function of the faculties is known as *Anugraha* and reaction to an object is known as *Upaghāta*.”⁴⁶ The receiving function can either be agreeable feeling (*Sukha vedanā*) or disagreeable feeling (*Dukha vedanā*). The next stage of consciousness is grouping consciousness or *Samtirikā Prajñā*. This state of mind is known as *Savitarka Citta*, *Paryeṣaka-Citta* or the investigating mind, which is by *Vicāra*, or *Pratyavekṣaka*, or discerning mind states. The next stage is *Javana Citta*, or a state of full cognition, where the individual cognizes the object in its proper significance. In the next state, the object is identified as a thing or a being and known as ‘registering’ consciousness, or *Tadāraṃbhana Citta*. This stage ends in the merging of the conscious state into the stream of being (*Bhavanga*), which is known as the *Bhavanga Pātha*, i.e. getting disentangled from the object directed consciousness.⁴⁷

3.4.2.4.7 *Mana-Indriya* (Mind Faculty)

The mind faculty (*Mana Indriya*) is internal in nature. Through it the seven mind elements (*Citta Dhātavaḥ*) are experienced. It is an internal organ (*Antarindriya*) as recognized by the Nyāya, the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta schools. It is the cognizing organ for pleasure, pain, will and effort. Buddhist thinkers describe the mind faculty as changing phenomenon, which makes the suitable conditions for every mental act and dominates over rebirth.⁴⁸ It is described by Kośa as both a resultant and non-resultant (*Vipāka* and *Avipāka*) process. Unlike Naiyāyikas, *Sarvāstivāda* maintains that the mind faculty is not made up of an accumulation of atoms (*paramānu*). Both mental and non-mental objects are internalized by means of the mind faculty. It may be pure and impure and morally wholesome (*Kuśala*), unwholesome (*Akuśala*) and neutral (*Avyākṛta*).

According to *Kośa*, the state of existence that connects a previous birth with its following birth is known as *Antrābhava*, and is constituted by five subtle elements (*Pañca skandha*). But *Sthaviravāda* does not consider this an intermediary state of existence, for death (*Cyuti*) is immediately followed by *Pratisamdhi-skandha*, which is constituted by five subtle elements. *Pratisamdhi-skandha* remains inherent in the mind faculty. Thus, the mind faculty is the primary condition for the stream of becoming (*Bhavanga-citta*); it is the unmodified, undetermined units of flowing consciousness. “In its primary and original state it remains the substratum of flowing existence in all states like death (*Cyuti*), linking state of existence (*Pratisamdhi*), prenatal and post-natal states (*Bhavanga*), sleep (*Susupti*), senselessness (*Mūrchā*) and trance stage of meditation (*Samādhi*).”⁴⁹ Thus, the mind faculty is present in all states of individual existence including both the liberated (*Arhat*) and ordinary person. It is also found together with

the faculty of no-pleasure and no-unpleasure. Thus, the entire psychological nature is supported by the mind faculty, which undergoes necessary changes in different cases. The mind faculty appears in all three spheres (*Kāma, Rūpa and Arūpa*), along with other faculties, which themselves vary in nature, as the mind faculty remains constant. Ten functions of mind faculty are elaborately described by Aruna Halder in her book '*Some Psychological Aspect of Ahidharmakośa*' (p-58).

3.4.2.5 Saṃskāra Skandha

Buddhism does not believe in the existence of a Soul, but believes in the transmigration of the fruits of karma from one birth to the next. The two births are linked by the *saṃskāras*, which are subtle. *Cetanā*, or volition, is described as the first stirring of consciousness and *Saṃskāra Skandha* includes the six fold formation of *Cetanā*. These *Saṃskāras* are composed of psycho-physiological material, which are used for making up organic objects. "The quality and subtlety of *Saṃskāras* appear as different in the different levels of *Kāmadhātu* (sphere of sensuous nature), *Rūpadhātu* (Sphere of corporal nature) and *Ārupayadhātu* (sphere of non corporal nature)."⁵⁰ The *Cittasika dharmas* (mind derivatives) and *Citta-Viprayukta dharmas* (mentally dissociated) are included in *saṃskāras skandha*. It is non-sensuous and different from *Rūpa* and *Vedanā skandhas*. The *saṃskāras* are classified into *Punya* (morally wholesome), *Apunya* (morally unwholesome), and *Aninjya* (neither morally wholesome nor morally unwholesome).

Two significant functions of *Saṃskāra skandha* are (1) As non material nature it works together with every mind as associations, instincts and attitudes. Thus, *Saṃskāras*

precedes every other mental function. Also, (2) *Saṃskāras* act as convergent and divergent suggestions with regards to a particular mental state, so *saṃskāras* are preceded by *Vijñāna*.

According to *Abhidharmakośa*, *Saṃskāras* are volitional in nature. *Cetanā* is described as *Citta Praspanḍaḥ*, or psychic stirring, so *Saṃskāra* is not a merely conscious and prepared mental attitude, but a much deeper organic experience. *Saṃskāras* being volitional in nature, are subject to moral judgment, i.e. they can be morally judged.⁵¹ *Saṃskāras* form the nature of an individual; all actions based on *Saṃskāras* naturally are to be judged.

Saṃskāras are generic; they remain as either active (*Pratyutpannaḥ*) or dormant (*Anāgata*) or inactive (*Atita*) in every human nature. The manifestation of a particular *Citta*, to a large extent, is determined by the joint cooperation of the *Citta* (consciousness) and *Saṃskāras*. “The different patterns of combination of the *saṃskāras* appear in different make up of a particular moment of *citta* or functioning state of consciousness.”⁵²

Saṃskāras are present from the time of birth, up to death, and also during the intermediary state of existence (*pratisandhi citta*). “The *Saṃskāras* of different types of combination, in different pattern in the different stages are constituted of objects (*Saṃskṛtas*). Thus by means of *Saṃskāra* the subtle and abstract nature becomes manifest and concrete, the simple become complex or a *pr̥thak-jñāna* becomes ārya.”⁵³

3.4.2.5.1 Classification of *Saṃskāras*

Saṃskāras are included in *dharmas* which are both psychical and physical potentials. They are the initial bio-psychological urges that are dynamic in nature, and remain active or inactive background for all actions. These urges, which cooperate and coexist, are combined with various patterns of individual personality. *Saṃskāras* can be divided into two groups: Psychogenic impressions and Biogenic impressions. Some *Saṃskāras* which are always present along with the mind are known as *Caitta* or *Citta Saṃprayukta* (mind derivative). *Sarvāstivāda* recognizes 46 *Caitta* items, but they are not simultaneously present. They function in different teams and produce a particular mind state (*Citta*). They can be grasped under six different groups. There are other *Saṃskāras* which function in spite of mind, known as *Citta-Viprayukta Saṃskāras*, or items dissociated from the mind or *citta*. According to *Sarvāstivāda*, there are 14 *Citta Viprayukta Saṃskāras*, which have more biological significance than psychological. “These indicate basic bio-psychological attitudes of an individual, account for different motive patterns and deeper conditioning of the impulses.”⁵⁴ All impressions are non-spatial and internal in nature, and are found either in active or in dormant states.

3.4.2.5.2 *Citta Saṃprayukta Dharma*

According to *Sarvāstivāda*, the 46 *Caitta dharmas* are real in all three phases of time i.e. past, present and future. They are mentally active and *Citta* is made up of the *Caittadharmas*. *Caitta* never leaves an organism; they may be in inactive or dormant for some time, but present always. For example, *Krodha* (anger) is a *Caitta* which develops under certain conditions. When those conditions are gone, it is extinguished. Though

Krodha does not appear in the mind, at all times, this does not mean that it will not occur again. Although *Krodha* may be inactive and dormant, it does not leave the organism.⁵⁵

The composition of *Citta*, or mind, is determined by the particular *Caitta* groups changing moment to moment. However, these 46 *caitta dharmas* do not function simultaneously; they function in six groups. This grouping is mostly ethical, and can be classified as: *Kuśala* (morally wholesome), *Akuśala* (morally unwholesome) and *Avyākṛta* (neither both). These six groups are

- (a) *Mahābhūmika Citta* (basic mind state): These are the generally permeating mind states that are universally present and indispensable for every possible Mind-state composition. The basic mind consists of cognitive, emotive and conative state of consciousness. The basic mind state combine with other *Caitta dharmas* form various other mind states. According to Vasubandhu, a momentary slice of awareness includes one factor of each of these basic mind states. There are ten kinds: *Vedanā* (feeling), *Cetanā* (volition), *Samjñā* (identification or perception), *Chanda* (desire), *Sparsā* (contact), *Mati* (cognizance), *Smṛti* (memory), *Manasikāra* (attention), *Adhimukti* (approbation), and *Samādhi* (concentration).
- (b) *Kuśala Mahābhūmika Citta* (morally wholesome mind state): These are the ten good permeating factors which are always accompanied with very good awareness: *Śraddhā* (faith), *Apramāda* (vigilance), *Praśrabdhih* (tranquility), *Upekṣā* (equanimity), *Hri* (modesty, shame in an internal sense), *Apatrapā* (shame in an external sense), *Alobha* (absence of greed), *Adveṣa* (non-hatred), *Avihimsā* (nonviolence) and *Virya* (energy).

- (c) *Akuśala Mahābhūmika Citta* (morally unwholesome mind state): These are the mind states which are always defiling and always bad. They are of two kinds- *Ahrikyā* (shamelessness) and *Anapatrāpyā* (disregard).
- (d) *Kleśa Mahābhūmika Citta* (impure mind state): These are the six types of factors that arise with every defilements. However, a factor of this sort is not necessarily bad; it may be neutral. These are bad, but not unbeneficial. They are: *Moha* or *Avidyā* (delusion or ignorance), *Pramāda* (heedlessness), *Kauśidya* (sloth), *Aśrabdhi* (lake of confidence), *Styāna* (lethargy), and *Auddhatya* (excitement).
- (e) *Parittakleśabhūmika Citta* (limited mind state): These elements are purely mental and never associated with sensuous consciousness. Vasubandhu admits ten kinds of afflictions- *Krodha* (anger), *Markṣa* (hypocrisy), *Mātsarya* (selfishness), *Irṣyā* (envy), *Pradāsa* (spite), *Vihimsā* (violence), *Upanāha* (vengefulness), *Māyā* (deceit), *Śāthya* (craftiness) and *Mada* (arrogance).
- (f) *Aniyata Citta* (irregular or neutral mind state): These are the mental operations that do not neatly fall within a definite division. They are 8 kinds: *Kaukritya* (repentance), *Middha* (torpor), *Vitarka* (discussion), *Vicāra* (judgment), *Rāga* (affection), *Pratigha* (anger), *Māna* (pride), and *Vicikitsa* (doubt).

3.4.2.5.3 *Cittaviprayukta Saṃskāra*

Viprayuktasaṃskāras are dissociated from *citta* and are also different from the *Rūpa-skandh*. These are ‘composite energy apart from the matter and mind.’⁵⁶ They are also different from *Samprayukta* and *Saṃskṛta dharmas*, hence called *Viprayukta Saṃskāras*,

which are distinct from the *rūpa*, *citta*, *caitta*, and *asaṃkṛta dharmas*. They are not always active, but remain in a potential stage. Although they are independent of mind and matter, they become active by the connection of mental and material bases. *Sarvāstivāda* regards these categories as real as other factors, each having its own essential nature. Ghoska, Dharmasri and Vasubandhu maintain 14 types of dissociate factors. They are: (1) *Prāpti* (attainment), (2) *Aprāpti* (non-attainment), (3) *Sabhāgata* (common characteristics), (4) *Asamjñika* (absence of perception), (5) *Asamjñi-samāpti* (stage of meditation producing cessation of perception), (6) *Nirodha-samāpti* (stage of meditation producing cessation of mental activity), (7) *Jivitendriya* (life), (8) *Jāti* (origination), (9) *Sthiti* (continuance), (10) *Jarā* (decay), (11) *Anityata* (impermanence), (12) *Nāmakāya* (words), (13) *Padakāya* (sentence) and (14) *Vyanjanakāya* (letters).

3.5. Person as a Moral and Social Being

In Buddhism morality has an emphasized position in developing the individual and social life. Man cannot escape from the effect of his karma; every act, good or bad, produces its inevitable and inexorable consequence. Man's destiny is determined by his *karma*. There is no *karma* without consequence and intention. The doctrine of karma is the main principle in Buddhist ethics. "That ethics may be characterized as an autonomous system of morality, in which man stands in no relation of dependence to any being outside."⁵⁷

In the fourth noble truth, 'The Eightfold Path' reveals the whole Buddhist moral philosophy. These are the practices by following which one can attain Nirvāna. The Hinayānist ethical philosophy is developed on the basis of three disciplines: morality

(*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). These three steps are the basis from which one can attain *Arhatship* and *Nirvāna*. Among them, morality is intrinsically related to the attainment of deliverance and enlightenment. It is not only a mere means, “the method of reaching the goal is of such a character that it participates in the nature of the goal itself; the means and the aim or end cannot be separated for the end determines and, therefore, is an inherent part of the method to be employed. Ethics in Buddhism is integrally associated with metaphysical, doctrinal presupposition on the one hand, and with final realization (*Nirvāna*, *arhatship*) on the other hand.”⁵⁸

Theravāda Buddhism maintains a double standard of morality, based on the different ends which the layman and monk seek. Layman generally seeks present happiness and good rebirth, whereas the monk seeks to attain *Nirvāna*. A Buddhist must take Three Refuges in the Buddha, *Dharma* (doctrine) and *Sangha* (order) and has to observe Five Precepts i.e. (1) *Ahimsā*, abstention from destruction of life, (2) *Asteya*, not taking what is not given, (3) *Satya*, abstention from falsehood, (4) *Brahmachārya*, sexual cleanliness, adultery for layman and (5) *Aparigraha*, abstention from intoxicants. Monks have to follow strictly these five Precepts accompanied with another five basic moral obligations. They are: (6) refrain from untimely food, (7) refrain from seeing the performance of dancers, musicians and jesters, (8) refrain from adoring body in various ways, (9) refrain from use of high and comfortable bed, and (10) refrain from taking gold and silver. These ten Precepts constitute the *śīla* (morality) discipline of Hinayāna Buddhism. To enter into the meditation stage and attain *Nirvāna* the monk must purify morally himself. “The significance of morality resides principally in the fact that without

the good life for the basis the state of super-consciousness or *samādhi*, which in its turn is the foundation of wisdom, is impossible of attainment.”⁵⁹

After cultivating the *śīla* discipline the ascetic enters in the meditation stage. This is the stage of concentration of the mind upon a single object. “In the more inclusive sense, combining denotative and connotative aspects, *samādhi* traditionally includes mindfulness and self-possession; contentment; emancipation from the hindrances; preliminary exercise for the development of one-pointedness of mind; the various ascending stage of super-consciousness to which concentration is capable of leading; and the different super-normal powers for the development of which the states are the basis.”⁶⁰ Different developmental stages are evolved in meditation; the negative gain of abstention from unwholesome actions and the positive gain of an undisturbed and tranquil mind are united. The ascetic has to remove five hindrances—lust, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and anxiety, and doubt. To overcome these hindrances he has to develop his habits, practices and reflections.⁶¹

Four stages of intent meditation are accepted and can be achieved by an aspirant consecutively.⁶² (a) In the first stage the ascetic separates himself from passion and evil states of mind. He conjains with application initial (*vitarka*) and sustained (*vicāra*) that arise from seclusion and is coupled with pleasure and joy. (b) The second stage of meditation arises by the cessation of *vitarka* and *vicāra*; it is conducive to inward peace, characterized by concentration of mind, and also endowed with pleasure and pain. (c) The third intent meditation stage involves indifference to pleasure, is associated with mindfulness and knowledge, and is connected with the bodily feeling of joy. Lastly, (d) the fourth meditation stage involves the purification, mindfulness, endows with

indifference, freedom from sorrow and joy consequent on the renunciation of either and ceases from all suffering. It is the highest stage to be achieved and is called Right Meditation (*samyaksamādhi*).

Enlightenment or *Prajñā* is the last stage to be achieved for the development of liberating insight. Four stages are distinguishable in the gradual development of Enlightenment: *Sotāpanna* (Stream-Entrant), *Sakadāgāmin* (Once-Returner), *Anāgāmin* (No-Returner) and *Arhat* (Holy One). *Sotāpanna* developing sufficient insight breaks completely three fetters: (a) wrong belief concerning the nature of individuality, (b) skeptical doubt, and (c) dependence upon morality and external asceticism. In this stage still the monk has to rebirth in human and divine planes, no more than seven times. The *Sakadāgāmin* is able to weaken, though not break, the two fetters of sexual desire and ill-will. In his one rebirth he will attain full Enlightenment. The *Anāgāmin*, having burst all five lower fetters, is reborn in one of the Pure Abode, and hence attain *Nirvāna* without further human birth. By his insight the *Arhat* shatters the five remaining fetters: desire for existence in the world of form (*rūpa-rāga*), desire for existence in the formless world (*arūpa-rāga*), conceit (*māna*), restlessness (*uddhacca*), and ignorance (*avidyā*).⁶³ The *Arhat* endows with True Knowledge (*prajñā*). He acquires the true knowledge about Four Noble Truths and of the nature of object which Hinayānists compare with Buddha. He ceases complete suffering and attains *Nirvāna*.

Hinayānist insists that to attain *Arhatship* and *Nirvāna* one must have to adopt the monastic life; the world has to be renounced and strenuous training is necessary. The method proclaimed by the Buddha becomes a way of life. “The monastic way of

morality, meditation and wisdom is the only way, since only in this manner can the chain of causation be broken.”⁶⁴

Hinayānist’s morality is completely autonomous and radically individualistic. They do not believe in any power or condition that determines the destiny of a person; he entirely determines his own destiny. They emphasize the individual attainment of salvation by adopting a monastic life. Since all acts are intentional and conscious, extreme subjectivity is given importance. Preeminently, the vices of lust, anger and delusion are to be avoided completely. Positive virtues like wisdom, love and generosity are to be cultivated. The highest virtue is an impersonal motherly-love that includes pity, sympathy and compassion for all suffering beings. Good will towards all sentient life is to be manifested. The Hinayānists emphasis on self-culture is ultimately for the purpose of serving others more worthily. The monk practices self-restraint, abstinence, temperance, contentment and humility not merely out of pride or self interest. “Since a monk is able to control his conduct and thought completely, he can win *Nirvāna* by having and preserving more good desires than bad one.”⁶⁵

3.6 *Nirvāna*

In Buddhism, liberation means liberation from suffering. This suffering arises from the mistaken view of self, which itself arises from a collection of impermanent aggregates. “This mistaken view is our attachment and assents to the naturally occurring false appearance of ourselves and of our aggregates as selves and of our aggregates a possession of selves.”⁶⁶ So according to Vasubandhu, we must leave up the mistaken

view that we are a self and must possess the knowledge that we are a collection of aggregates. Besides this collection nothing exists.

In the concluding verse of '*Refutation of the Theory of a Self*', Vasubandhu insists on understanding the teachings of the Buddha about selflessness person that leads to the freedom from suffering in *samsāra*. "He concluded that we can become free from suffering in *samsāra* if we reject the Tirthikas' theory of self and internalized the Buddhas' teachings on selflessness...and that he hopes that what he has explained in the 'Refutation' about our selfness will spread by its own power among those wise enough to comprehend and practice it."⁶⁷

Vaibhāṣika maintains that *Nirvāna* is real, good and eternal. Because it is an *Asaṃskṛta dharma*, it has real existence and can be achieved by following certain disciplines (*śīla, samādhi and prajñā*). In *Abhidharmakośa*, from the stand point of Vaibhāṣika, Vasubandhu said that *Nirvāna* is one of the *Asaṃskṛtas* (unconstituted). To refute Sautrāntika he said that *mārga* leads to the attainment or possession of *Viśaṃyoga* (disconnection), or *Nirvāna*, and that it is self existent and not by the fruits of *mārga* (*Kośa* II-5). *Viśaṃyoga*, or *Pratiśaṃkhyānirodha* is a dharma, the nature of which is real and inexpressible; only the *Āryas* realize it inwardly and individually. It is an entity (*davya*), real, good, eternal and distinct from other.⁶⁸

According to Vaibhāṣika, *Nirvāna* and *samsāra* are both real. "The Vaibhāṣikas did not maintain that *Nirvāna* was a kind of paradise but that the annihilation of all life (*nirodha*), the essence of *Nirvāna* was a reality (*Nirodh-satyavastu*), i.e. materialistic."⁶⁹

The Vaibhāṣika maintains that *Nirvāna* is not mere negation. It is a *dharma* in which

there is the absence of *Samskāras*; in itself it is a positive entity. It is the destruction of *kleśa* by *prajñā* and freedom from suffering.

Nirvāna according to Vaibhāṣika, is the extinction of all suffering, even consciousness. Candrakīrti objected that *Nirvāna* cannot be a simple extinction, as *Nirvāna* itself is a reality (*bhāva*); extinct life is not an entity. Vasubandhu replied that in *Nirvāna* passion and life are extinct and *Nirvāna* is what remains when consciousness is extinct.⁷⁰

In *Nirvāna* the elements comprising individual existence are gradually reduced to a state of quiescence and extinction. In final *Nirvāna*, all are extinct and there is nothing but the realization of the moral law. This *Nirvāna* is not a spiritual principle. “The moral law conduces through a very long process of evolution the living world into a state of final quiescence where there is no life, but something lifeless.”⁷¹

According to Hinayāna, *Nirvāna* can be attained by leading a pure life and having acquired knowledge of the elements of existence and phenomena as taught by the Buddha. Two kinds of *Nirvāna* are accepted (1) *Sopādisesa Nirvāna*- here one attains *Nirvāna* in his/her life time in which the residual substratum of five *upadanaskandhas* remain. (2) *Nirupādhiśesa Nirvāna* is attained after death and is without residue. These two kinds of *Nirvāna* are possible by the *nirodha*, or suppression of, “(a) *Kleśa* (defilements, obstructions) in the *Sopādhiśesa Nirvāna* and of (b) *Skandhas* (group of elements making a personality) in *Nirupādhiśesa Nirvāna*.”⁷²

In Vaibhāṣika two kinds of *nirodha* or cessations are recognized: *Pratisamkhyānirodha* and *Apratisamkhyānirodha*. *Pratisamkhyānirodha* is the *summum bonum* of the *Sarvāstivādins*. Vasubandhu defines it as the separation of the constituents (of a

compound) (*kośa* 2). Commentary says that *Pratisamkhyā* is *prajñā* or knowledge; as the cessation brought about by knowledge it is called *Pratisamkhyānirodha*.⁷³ *Pratisamkhyānirodha* is a disjunction from impure *dharma*. It signifies a certain pure *prajñā*; the comprehension of the truth. The ‘extinction’ one takes possession of by this *prajñā* is called *Pratisamkhyānirodha*. There are numerous kinds of impure *dharma*, and accordingly, each disjunction taken separately is *Pratisamkhyānirodha*. Not all extinctions is alike, one extinction may not correspond to other extinction (AKB I. 6a-b).

It is the liberation or *Nirvāna* stage and its essential characteristic is everlastingness. It cannot be explained with words. It can only be realized by the self experience of a perfect man. From a practical standpoint it can be designated as the highest good, eternally existing, and may be called as *Visamyoga* or deliverance.⁷⁴ The commentary on *Abhidharmakośa* describes *Nirvāna*, and explains that it is eternal, that it is happiness and therefore that it is the highest.⁷⁵ Like all other Buddhist schools, Vaibhāṣika also believes that truth is realized in *Samādhi* or meditation. They believe in *sunyatāsamādhi* in which one loses everything, even oneself.

Apratisamkhyānirodha is a different type of extinction, different from disjunction and consists of absolutely hindering the arising of future *dharmas*. It is called *Apratisamkhyā* because it is not obtained by the comprehension of truth (*prajñā*), but by eliminating of the cause of arising (AKB p.60). *Apratisamkhyānirodh*, according to Vasubandhu, arises due to the absence of knowledge, brought about by great impediments. Commentary defines it as “when for instance, the eye and the mind are fixed on some particular colour, then a number of other colours, sounds, smell etc. though born, enter the past without being cognized; for in the same act a particular of

cognitions is not possible. This entering the past is their cessation, which is *Apratisamkhyānirodha*.”⁷⁶ It is the non perceived and non actualized knowledge.

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