The Sarvastivāda school was one of the most popular schools of Theravāda. Different writers stated the origin of Sarvastivāda differently. According to the Pāli tradition, the Mahisasakas were the earliest to secede from the Theravāda among its subsects. Out of the Mahisasakas, the Sarvastivādins developed and gradually the other schools emerged. While according to Vasumitra, the Sarvastivāda branched off first from the Theravāda and from the Sarvastivādins the Mahisasakas and other schools appeared. Out of the Mahisasakas the Dharmaguptikas developed. It is said that there were two Mahisasaka schools—one was earlier than the other. Vasumitra missed the earlier Mahisasakas while he was enumerating the subsects. He, however, points out that earlier Mahisasakas agreed more with the Theravādins while the later with the Sarvastivādins. There is no doubt that the Theravādins were first divided into two sects, Mahisasakas and Vātsiputriyas. Then from the former branched off the Sarvastivādins and not from the Theravādins directly as stated by Vasumitra and other writers.

The doctrinal controversy among the Buddhist monks continued until the time of Asoka. They founded two
centres—one in Kashmir under the leadership of Venerable Madhyantika and the other at Mathura under the Venerable Upagupta. Hence the king summoned the third council to discuss the controversy between the two groups. Consequently, the king adhered to the Theravāda or the original doctrine of the Buddha and fixed the order to accept it. Henceforward, those monks who did not accept the doctrine of Theravāda had to leave Magadha. They went to Kashmir. They occupied a prominent place there and came to be known as Sarvāstivādins. Kashmir became the centre of Buddhistic faith in northern India. Then the school of Sarvāstivāda flourished during the reign of king Kaniska, the emperor of Kushana dynasty. It was during the first century (78-103 A.D.). The conversion of Kaniska into Sarvāstivāda in the first century A.D. was brought up Sarvāstivādins as the powerful and predominant school over the whole of India. That the school was widespread to Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan, Kashmir and Nepal.

The word 'Sarvāstivādin' is derived from the Sanskrit terms sarvam 'all things' and asti 'exist'. The word Sarvāstivādins in Sanskrit denotes "those who believe that all things exist". Hence in Sanskrit it is known as 'Sarvāstivādins' or in Pāli 'Sabbathāvada'. The term Sarvāstivādin implies that the essence of all things, whether empirical or absolute, worldly or unworldly did
exist do exist, and will exist. According to Vasubandhu, those who accept the existence of elements (dhammas) in all the three periods i.e. past, present and future are called Sarvāstivādins. It is generally accepted that according to the Sarvāstivādins everything, internal as well as external exists. According to this school the external world and its constituent elements, have a real existence. Therefore, this school believes that all things exist continuously in all the three phases of time.

Like the Sthaviravāda, the Sarvāstivāda school translated the Pāli Pitakas viz., the Sutta, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma into Sanskrit and wrote elaborate commentaries on all the three Pitakas clarifying their psychological process. Even though there is some differences in the arrangements and classification of treatment there is substantial similarity between the Pāli and the Sanskrit Vinaya and the Sutta literature. However, the difference between the two schools is to be found in Abhidhamma Pitaka, which raises an important historical question regarding the relationship between the two traditions. Moreover, it is quite probable that the two traditions developed their Abhidhamma independently. It may be added that the order of the suttas is very different from that of the Theravāda. And inspite of taking the rules of disciplines or Vinaya, they were interested in the
philosophical or metaphysical views. Thus the Sarvāstivāda school neglected the Vinaya Pitaka and adopted the Sutta and the Abhidhamma. But they have their own Sutta and Abhidhamma Pitaka. Like the Theravādins, the Sarvāstivādins divided their canon into three Pitakas. They replaced the term Nikaya as Āgama.

Vinayapitaka:

(i) Vinaya - Vibhaṅga,
(ii) Vinaya - Vastu,
(iii) Vinaya - Ksudraka-Vastu and
(iv) Vinaya - Uttara-grantha.

Abhidhammapitaka:

(i) Jñāna - prasthana-sāstra,
(ii) Dharma - skandha pāda,
(iii) Sangītītī - paryaya pāda,
(iv) Prajnaptī - pāda,
(v) Vijñāna - kaya-pāda,
(vi) Prakarana - pāda and
(vii) Dhatu - kāya pāda.

Sutta Pitaka:

(i) Dirgha Āgama (Dīgha Nikāya),
(ii) Madhyama Āgama (Majjhima Nikāya),
(iii) Samyukta Āgama (Samyutta Nikāya),
(iv) Ekottara Āgama (Aṅguttara Nikāya).
It is evident that the Jñāna-prasthana-sāstra was the foremost authoritative text of the Abhidhamma and the other six are supplement to it. There is no doubt that this is the oldest and most authoritative text of the seven Abhidhamma texts. Whereas, in Pāli Sutta and Vinaya literature there is no reference to Abhidhammapitaka, but the Sarvāstivādins give much importance to Abhidhammapitaka. Takakusu analyses the two traditions of Abhidhammapitaka and come to the conclusion that "there is no real connection between the Pāli and the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma".¹ "N.Dutta too arrived at similar conclusions and suggested that the two schools worked out their Abhidharma texts independently".² Though the Sarvāstivāda followers were interested in the Sutta and the Abhidhamma, they followed the authority of the Abhidhamma texts. Like the Sthaviravādins, they believed in the plurality of elements. They stressed that the universe is made of different elements. The Sarvāstivādin philosophy is an atomic doctrine of matter combined with a theory of perception. They held that there are entities, dhammas which in their ultimate nature exist in all the three periods of time viz. past, present and future. According to this system the existence of objects as the meeting point of past, present and future states, sought through the following interpretation:
(i) Bhāvanyathātvavāda - Nature changed but not the thing,
(ii) Laksananyathātvavāda - Character changed but not the thing,
(iii) Avasthanyathātvavāda - Mode changed but not the thing,
(iv) Anyathanyathākatvavāda - Relative changes.

The Sarvāstivādins defined that the universe is made of different elements. They believed that there were seventy five different kinds of existence of these basic elements. The following are the seventy-five elements:

(i) Rūpa (matter) - eleven (11),
(ii) Citta (mind) - forty six (46)
(iii) Caittasikas (derivation of mind) - fourteen (14),
(iv) Cittaviprayuktas (dissociated from the mind),
(v) Three Asaṃskrtas (unconstituted) or uncompounded.

Above the five categories the first four categories are known as 'Saṃskṛta' (compounded) and the last category is known as 'Asaṃskṛta' (uncompounded). Out of these seventy five elements seventy two (72) were formed into five skandhas viz. (i) body (matter), (ii) sensation (vedanā), (iii) perception (samjñā), (iv) the mental constituents and finally (v) consciousness (vijñāna).
The Asamskrta (unconstituted) dhamma divided into the following three categories:
(i) Pratisankhya - nirodha or prajñā (intuitive wisdom),
(ii) Apratisankhya - nirodha-nisvana (liberation and
(iii) Akāsa (space).

The seventy two dhammas formed the chain of causes, which is known as 'Saṃskṛta' (full of forces). They produce karmic residues (saṃskāras) and transmitted from one life to another which continue the karmic effects into the future. The self is a chain of such forces.

On the other hand, the Asamskrta-dhamma (things incomposite) are not produced by other things. They are self existent and exempt from change. Being free from production, indestructible, they are permanent or eternal.

Thus, the major effects of the Sarvāstivāda school were to explain the essential characteristics of the seventy five theory of dependent causation. This theory states that the cycles of our existence can be explained by means of mental impurity (the outcome of ignorance); clinging to existence and suffering. They regard the Twelve Links of the Chain of Causation as simply describing the incessant flux of impurity clinging, and suffering.
According to Sarvāstivādins the pratisandhi citta (intermediary mind, seeking rebirth), gradually becomes attached to the various other complex mental functions both during the pre-natal and post-natal stages. Then the 'birth to death' and 'death to birth' cycles are inherent in some form of impressions (saṃskāra) which are mental in nature. Thus the Sarvāstivādins regard four characteristics viz., origination, staying, growth, and decay, and destruction as the only appearance or existence of a thing throughout the three divisions of time, the past, the present and the future. These four characteristics are known as 'Chatur-Laksana' in Buddhist philosophy. But on the opposite of this doctrine the Theravāda accept only the present state and reject the past and future state. According to this system only the present state is real and others are unreal. The Sarvāstivādins held that though worldly things existed, they were impermanent subject to decay and necessarily involved suffering and should not be considered desirable.

The school of Sarvāstivāda used two methods in their classifications of things viz;

(i) the subjective method and
(ii) the objective method.
According to the subjective method things are divided into three departments:

(i) the five skandhas or constituents of being,
(ii) the twelve ayatanas or locations and
(iii) the eighteen dhatus or 'bases'.

On the other hand, according to the objective method all things are classified into two such as:

(i) Saṃskṛta (compounded) and
(ii) Asaṃskṛta (uncompounded).

According to this school the four classes of composite things viz, matter, mind, mental and the non-mental, together the incomposites constitute the five fold objective divisions of things. And the subjective classification together with the two forms of truth i.e. the transcendental and the conventional lead to the attainment of Nirvāṇa. This school supported many doctrines of the early Buddhism, among them the most important are the doctrine of dhammas, the doctrine of body-mind dualism, and finally the doctrine of perception or direct-realism.

The term 'Dharma' (dhamma) means in Sanskrit, law, rule, faith, religion, word, phenomena, thing, state etc.
On the other hand, the Theravāda states that dhamma is only momentary. Unlike the Theravāda, the Sarvāstivādins maintain that dhamma can be considered either in their actual being as phenomena or in their ideal being as noumena. They held that 'dhammas' have existence in the present which is the meeting point of the past and future phases of time.

They held that object or process exists outside the mind and independently of that mind. They also admit that the world must be constituted body on the one hand and mind on the other. To the Sarvāstivāda matter is not only independent of mind but also the basis of consciousness or mind. The mind or citta includes all the associations (smṛti), sensations (vijñāna), impressions (saṃskāras) and perception (saṃjñā).

According to this system, there are three necessary conditions for direct perception or direct knowledge of an object. They are:

(i) a seer or sense organ (which sees when condition are right),
(ii) eye-consciousness (the knowledge that consciousness has when the eye sees),
(iii) the object that the eye sees and that the mind is conscious of.
Thus from the theory of direct perception the Sarvāstivāda gets three points viz.

(i) the external world and mind are both real.
(ii) the external world of body is 'real' in a secondary sense.
(iii) that independent external world of 'real' physical objects can be known directly by minds in the sense that what appears to mind is precisely and exactly what exists in the world. Thus the Sarvāstivādin philosophy is an atomic doctrine of matter combined with a theory of direct perception.

This school maintains that an individual is capable of attaining Arhathood. Further, a continuous flow of mind might amount to concentration of mind. But this school denies the transcendental powers ascribed to the Buddha and the Bodhisattva by the Mahasanghikas.

The Sarvāstivāda school was finally developed by Vasubandhu (between 420 and 500 A.D.) and Sanghabhadra (approx. 420 and 500 A.D.). Moreover, the final development of this philosophy is represented by these two philosophers. Hence, they may be said to be the highest representatives of this school. After the conversion of Vasubandhu from Hinayana (Sautrantika) into Mahayanism
(yogācāra) the Sarvāstivāda and all other branches of Hinayana school declined. Gradually, in any case the Sarvāstivāda school disappeared from India along with all other forms of Buddhism. Moreover, there are other philosophers of this school such as, Asvaghosa (approx. 78-103 A.D.) and Katyayaniputra (78-103 A.D.) etc. They are also great thinkers of the Sarvāstivādin school.

Thus the special manuals of the Sarvāstivādin philosophy can be discussed under the following three important works:

(i) The Abhidharma Kosa of Vasubandhu.

(ii) Nyayanusara by Sanghabhadra - This is a commentary on the Abhidharma Kosa, and the refutation of those points which Vasubandhu has departed from orthodox Sarvāstivādin philosophy.

(iii) Abhidharma Prakarana - This is a resume of the preceding work and also composed by Sanghabhadra. In this case, Sanghabhadra has omitted much of his polemic and contended himself with the mere elucidation of the Sarvāstivādin philosophy.

Vasubandhu:

Vasubandhu the younger brother of Asanga was born in the fourth century C.E. in Gandhara in North West India.
Takakusu the famous Japanese scholar, considering all the possible sources from India and China, maintains that Vasubandhu was born between 420 and 500 A.D. He died at the age of eighty. The development of Vasubandhu's philosophy can be discussed in three distinct phases:

(i) The first phase he subscribes to the Sarvāstivāda thought.
(ii) The second phase is a transitional phase when, still Sautrantika, he displays Yogācāra leanings. His Karmasidhi Prakarana belongs to this phase.
(iii) The final phase belongs to the Vimsika and the Trimsika, where the Mahayana influence is present in its full blown form.

"The Chinese sources described that there are thirty six authoritative texts of Vasubandhu. The list includes the excellent texts of Vasubandhu. The list includes the excellent Hinayani text of Abhidharma-kosa and its Bhasya Mahayani like Vimsika, Trimsika, Vijnaptimatrata and so forth".

In about the fifth century A.D. Vasubandhu wrote his famous text Abhidharma-kosa karika and its Bhasya. It was the combination of the different Abhidhamma texts of the Kashmir Vibhasa school of Sarvāstivāda. Because, the
Abhidharmakosa was written mostly from the point of view of the Vaibhāsika school of Kashmir. "According to Yasomitra the text is primarily based on the earlier works of Sarvāstivāda, the Jñānaprasthana etc. which provided the scriptural basis for its authenticity as a Vaibhāsika text". The Abhidharmakosa is an encyclopaedia of Buddhist philosophy. It is the most important text where the basic doctrinal position of Sarvāstivāda is clearly brought out. Vasubandhu maintains that Abhidhamma is an analytical study of the nature of the Dhamma (Real) of the different means for attaining (Real knowledge) e.g. purified mind, perfect knowledge etc. The title 'Abhidharmakosa' is a significant word. The term 'Kosa' indicates a 'holder' or a 'case' that consisting something carefully placed in it. The word 'Kosa' contains the valuable writings and essential points of Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma is an elaboration or exposition of the Suttas. Essentially the psychological and philosophical literature of Buddhist doctrine is arranged in Abhidhamma. In a wider sense, Abhidhamma is that which interpretes the Suttas from a particular standpoint of philosophy. In a more limited sense, Abhidhamma consists of cosmology, Biology, Physics, Metaphysics, Ethics and practical religion.

The topics of the Abhidharmakosa are discussed from both the subjective and objective point of view. The
objective pattern of the physical and metaphysical entities are discussed and classified in the first two chapters.

The subjective analysis of the cosmological process is found in chapter III.

The psychological analysis of the actions dispositions and the so-called phenomena of personality (pudgala) appears in chapter IV, V and VI respectively.

Finally, the deeper states of introspection into the psycho-dynamic state of existence can be found in chapter VII and VIII.

The Abhidharmakosa of Vasubandhu deals with the elements, the powers and faculties, cosmology i.e. the origin, arrangement and destruction of the universe with Karma, the passions, the various kinds of saints and paths which lead to salvation, and concludes with a survey of sacred cognition and meditational attainments. The text consisting of six hundred karikas or slokas and has eight chapters:

(i) Dhātu-Nirdeśa - deals with the nature of the faculties of a being.
(ii) Indriya-Nirdeśa - deals with the nature of universe.
(iii) Loka-Nirdeśā - deals with the nature of deeds and their fruits.
(iv) Karma-Nirdeśā - deals with the nature of latent impurities.
(v) Sanusaya-Nirdeśā - deals with the nature of constituents of a being
(vi) Aryapudgala-Nirdeśa - deals with the nature of person who is established in the four stages of sanctification.
(vii) Samadhi-Nirdeśa - deals with the nature of meditation or spiritual realisation.

Later on one chapter is added as appendix that discusses Pudgala containing a refutation of Ātmavāda.

Vasubandhu also wrote two treatises on logic, namely, the Tarkasastra and the Vada-Vidhi. As a Mahayanist he wrote commentaries on the Sadharma-pundarika. In addition to these, he expounded the Vijnapti-Matrata-Siddhi. It is found in Vimsika and Trimsika which contain twenty and thirty karikas respectively.

After his brother's death he wrote the two treatises on idealism, Vimsika and Trimsika. In the two compositions Vasubandhu succeeds in denying the reality of the external
world and at the same time defends the ultimate reality of pure consciousness Vijnaptimatrata. In his Vijnapti-Matrata-Siddhi Vimsika Vasubandhu proves that Reality is pure consciousness and that external objects do not exist outside of thought. Vasubandhu says that consciousness is the only reality. Because consciousness manifests itself into subject and object. It arises out of its own seed and then it manifests itself as an external object.

Sanghabhadra:

Sanghabhadra was a contemporary of Vasubandhu. He disagreed with Vasubandhu on some important points in the interpretation of Sarvāstivāda. Though he agreed with Vasubandhu's formation of Sarvāstivāda in the Abhidharmakosa karika, he differed to Vasubandhu's Bhasya on it. He tried to show Vasubandhu's weakness in the Sautrantika leanings and attempted to offer a corrective to Vasubandhu. According to Sanghabhadra, Vasubandhu had partisan in the Sarvāstivāda-Sautrantika debated on issues of fundamental questions. The Abhidharma Nyayanusara of Sanghabhadra is an important work where the basic doctrines of Vasubandhu have been declared. The text contains references to many old schools and works of early Buddhism and is a useful source book for the study of doctrinal development of Buddhism. In this text he refutes Vasumitra's Abhidharmakosasastra referring particularly to
those views put forward in justification of the Sautrantikas. In this work he quotes the names of many works and schools viz. Jñānaprasthāna, Vijñanakaya, Sautrantikas, Vijñānavādins and such others. It contains 10,000 slokas explaining the doctrine of Vibhasa.

The Abhidharmasamayapradipika is another work of Sanghabhadra. It is a compilation of the Nyāyanusarasastra with only an introductory chapter added to it. It contains, 1,20,000 slokas adhering to the Vibhasa and refuting the Kosa.

Sanghabhadra expounded his theory from two aspects of time which is interpretation of the systematic view of human life. His theory is based on the Dependent Origination, and the concept of the relativity of phenomena. But in early Buddhism the theory of Dependent Origination applied to the human structure and was not included the relativity of phenomena. According to Sanghabhadra the former is confined merely to the transmigration of body. It does refer to the uni-directional relationship. The latter is represented by the Six-Causes and-Four Conditions Theory, which is based upon the concept of karitra (actuality). It refers to the reciprocal relationship.
Sanghabhadra expounded the Theory of Dependent Origination from the viewpoint of time. His exposition the psycho-physical interpretation of the Dependent Origination is based upon the causality of time. In addition to this, he proposed a new interpretation, based on the actuality of time. The actuality of time refers to a simultaneous relationship among the time divisions, and concerns the activity of living things in mutual relationship. Sanghabhadra also accepted the early interpretation of Dependent Origination into three time divisions, viz. past, present and future. This doctrine is described by the traditional Buddhists as the 'three lives divisions':

According to the reality of time he divided the aphorism into three aspects for analysis. First he defines the meaning of 'exist' and secondly the meaning of 'occurs'. According to Sanghabhadra, the term 'exist' has a dual connotation which is applicable to the past and the present. In this way, the present and the past are connected by chronological time or causality. Hence the chronological time or causality belongs to the domain of Conventional Truth (samvrti-satya).

Secondly, the term 'occurs' denotes the relationship between the present and the future. This relationship implies that, if there is a present potentiality there will
be future occurrence. This explanation can be described as Absolute Truth (paramartha-satya). Therefore, it can be said that the first partisan of the aphorism 'when this exist' relates to the Conventional Truth which does not include potentiality. While the second aphorism 'when this occurs' represents Absolute Truth because potentiality is present. Thus existents in terms of Conventional Truth are the opposite of actuality (karitra) and all existents exist without conditions (pratyaya). On the other hand, existents in terms of Absolute Truth are the actuality which occurs from conditions. Sanghabhadra termed the Conventional Truth as 'acceptable agreement' (dharmasanketa) to distinguish it from Absolute Truth. In the Nyayanusarasasstra, he says "it is said in the Paramarthasaunyatasastras, of twelve Links namely saṃskāra originates from avidhya...jaramarana from jāti. In other words, dharmasanketa denotes the causal relationship between cause and effect (hetu-phala-anubandhu Ny T.29.428c)". This causal relationship Sanghabhadra termed 'intimation', since it relates to the domain of Conventional Truth. He maintains that the beginning of the psycho-physical process (pratītyasamutpāda) is merely dharmasanketa in lieu of the Absolute Truth. He further suggested that actuality is the conditions through which all things should be observed for no existent can exist without conditions.
According to early Buddhism the things arise by means of Pratītyasamutpāda, depending upon conditions. To them there is no beginning and no end. While according to Sanghabhadra, the mutuality and conditionality of things are based upon the actuality of time. From this standpoint there can be no beginning and no end. He suggested that the Twelve Links had a beginning and were also beginningless. The former is due to the time aspect of causality which is termed dhammasanketa while the later is due to actuality, which is termed paramartha.

Sanghabhadra tried to relate karitra with pratyaya. Thus, he applied the relationship of karitra and pratyaya in his explanation of the relativity of the phenomenal world. Karitra comes into existence depending upon conditions, therefore conditions are the basis of the arising of karitra. Even if there are many conditions present, karitra does not necessarily come into existence. Pratyaya as such is not equivalent to karitra but rather a requirement for the arising of karitra. Pratyaya can be called karitra only when it has an efficient function. Sanghabhadra says, "where karitra exists, pratyaya exists". He admits that pratyaya is related to karitra but not equivalent. He added that both terms have a separate reality. Sanghabhadra considers pratyaya and karitra is related in the sense that pratyaya is the basis
of karitra. The former does not have actuality but when the former (pratyaya) functions, then at that moment the later (karitra) comes into existence. Karitra cannot come into existence merely through the grouping of conditions alone.

Sanghabhadra's psycho-physical interpretation of pratītyasamutpāda gave predominance to pratyaya. This direction was assimilated and extended by Abhidharmika in the Six-Causes-and-Four-Conditions Theory. Principally, this theory dealt with the predominance of pratyaya. It can be said that the idea of pratyaya in Buddhist sense is much more important than the idea of hetu.

The Sarvāstivāda Karma theory is different from the Theravāda. The former is interpreted the Karma theory from the point of view of epistemology. Whereas the Theravāda Buddhist school put from the viewpoint of psychology. Epistemologically the Sarvāstivādins analysed the Karma theory from the viewpoint of the relation of cause and effect.

According to Sanghabhadra, Karma consists of three types i.e. kaya (bodily action) vaca (vocal action) and manasa (mental action). He stresses the importance of outward appearance (vijnapti) in order to complete a Karma. He says that Karma should be associated with outward
appearance. Even if mental karma; if sincere, will bring with it outward appearance such as bodily and vocal actions. According to him, when Karma has taken place there is no link between the cause and the effect. Then the effect arises. He explains the process of causing effect as follows: "A mental action (manasa karma) which has arisen in the past will become a cause to induce the wholesome effect (phalaksepa) and complete, realize, make it up, and bring it finally into completion".  

Asvaghosa:

Asvaghosa (approximately 78-103 A.D.) was a great Buddhist poet and philosopher. He was the contemporary of king Kaniska and belonged to the Sarvástiváda school. He was born at Ayodhya and his mother's name was Suvarnakshi. Asvaghosa had at first been a Vedantin and later converted into Buddhism. He might have brought Vedantic ideas into Buddhism and developed its philosophy. He was at first a Sarvástivadin, but finally converted into Mahayana.

All the Mahayana schools accept the ultimate truth and the empirical truth and also distinguish between these two truths. But Asvaghosa accepts only the empirical reality of the five aggregates, the twelve bases, and the eighteen elements. According to Mahayana the only Ultimate reality is the such-ness of things which is the very
essence of things. It is indescribable and is the only reality. To them, Such-ness is the same as nirvana and enlightenment is the essential body of Buddha. It is the perfection of everything that is good. It is the source of Buddha and Buddha himself is the one who has become the Such (Tathagata). It is the truth of inward being, peace and equanimity. They believe that Such-ness is the conscious conservator of everything and the conscious conservator that happens everything is its own source.

Asvaghosa, on the other hand, does not agree that Such-ness is the Ultimate reality. He defines Absolute as the only Ultimate Reality. He wanted to show how the world of plurality can come out of it. The Absolute projects itself though ignorance as world of phenomena. And all phenomena are related and produced by ignorance. Hence relativity (pratītyasamutpāda) is the work of ignorance. As ignorance does not have its own existence, relational intellect cannot provide Reality. Absolute Such-ness transcends everything. But when it is infected with ignorance it manifests itself as Conditional Suchness. Thus phenomenal world is the result of this Conditional Suchness. Here Asvaghosa utilizes the traditional Twelve Links Chain of Causation. According to him, plurality arises out of the Absolute conditioned by ignorance containing the formative forces including those generated
by our past actions. Then the conserving consciousness (alayavijñāna) is the same as Such-ness (Tathata). Then the original consciousness becomes the action-consciousness and next activity consciousness. That is, to say the same original consciousness first becomes the potencies and then the activities resulting from the potencies. Then produces mind, its particularity, the succession of mental phenomena, senses, objects, craving, birth, death and so forth.

Asvaghosa admits the conserving consciousness (alayavijñāna) as the highest reality and he calls it the such-ness of things. He believes that it is the positive essence of the elements of the world, and the essence of things as processions of events. Asvaghosa identified Tathata or Such-ness with bodhi or alayavijñāna or prajñā. From the point of view of infinite it is called tathagata-garbha and from the empirical standpoint it is samsara or the cycle of birth and death, and finally from the Ultimate standpoint, it is Nirvāṇa or positive bliss. The most important point to be considered in Asvaghosa's view is that Reality is indescribable and cannot be grasped by intellect. It is neither existence nor non-existence nor plurality nor both nor neither affirmation nor negation nor both neither. The view that Reality can be called neither sunya asunya nor both nor neither, was developed by
Sunyavada and the point that Reality is consciousness was developed by Vijnānavāda.

The following are the important works of Asvaghosa:

**Buddhacharita:**

The first work of Asvaghosa is Buddhacharita. It is a Mahakavya. The Buddhacharita describes not only the life and teachings of Buddha, but also explains the evidence of his encyclopaedic knowledge of India's mythological traditions and pre-Buddhist philosophical systems particularly the Sankhya. It contains seventeen chapters.

**Saundarananda-kavya:**

This is the second poem of Asvaghosa. It is also connected with the life story of the Buddha, but it amplifies those scenes and episodes in particular which receive scanty attention in the Buddhacharita. The actual theme of this poem describes the love story of Sundari and Nanda, the half brother of the Buddha. Nanda who was ordained as a monk against his will by the Buddha. Here the poet describes, Nanda is filled with the 'great pity' which makes him search his heart in deep commiseration for means whereby he may release the beings from suffering. Nanda attains to the realisation that everything is "transitory, empty, without self, and full of sufferings". At last Nanda
practices the four great meditations and becomes an Arhat. Asvaghosa declares that this poem intends to teach philosophy, which is liberation, the perfect peace in order to accept the Buddha's doctrine.

Sariputraprakarana:
This is the most important drama of the poet. It shows that he was a dramatist also. The subject-matter of the drama is a dialogue between Sariputra and his friend Maudgalyana. This drama treats of the conversion of Sariputra and his friend Maudgalyana. It is related in one of the most beautiful stories in the Mahavagga of the Vinayapitaka.

Gandhistotragatha:
Besides these he also wrote Gandhistotragatha a poem which contains twenty nine stanzas in the sragdhara metre. It is a beautiful poem, worthy of Asvaghosa both in form and contents.

Katyayaniputra:
The Venerable Katyayaniputra (approximately 78-103 A.D.) was the contemporary of king Kaniska the emperor of Kushana dynasty. He wrote Jñānaprasthana Sāstra. It is the foremost and most important of the seven Abhidhamma texts. This is the first authoritative work of the Sarvāstivādins.
It was compiled during the reign of emperor Kaniska in the fourth council. According to Paramartha (499-569 A.D.) five hundred years after the death of the Buddha Arhat Katyayananiputra went to Kashmir to collect the Abhidhamma of the Sarvāstivādins. There he collected the Abhidhamma with the help of five hundred Arhats and five hundred Bodhisattvas, and arranged it in eight books. This compilation was called 'Jñānapraśthana' and also known as 'Grantha' (Sanskrit) or Gantho (Pāli). Many scholars participated in the Council and decided to accept the Suttas and the Vinaya. The selected pieces were compiled according to their subject-matter. Those about wisdom form the Prajna Grantha, and those about meditation the Dhyana Grantha and so on. Thus after finishing the compilation of the eight books they kept it in a literary form. It consisted of 1,000,000 verses. The tradition considers that Jñānapraśthana is the first and the principal text, while the other six are regarded as supplementary to this. The original sanskrit of this work, consisted of 15072 slokas is lost, but two Chinese translations of it are produced. According to the Chinese tradition it was first translated into Chinese by Sanghabhadra and Dharmapriya. They brought it to China from Kashmir during fourth century A.D. The text is divided into eight sections of the following:

The first section consists of exposition of the best mundane topics: knowledge, individuality, faith and
reverence, lack of modesty, material constituents of the body and their characteristics and mental states.

The second one considers defilements, which hinder the spiritual progress of an adept, and the causes of defilements.

The third section is devoted to the acquisition of knowledge:

(i) the doctrinal matters by which a sekha becomes an asekha,
(ii) of right and wrong views,
(iii) of the means of attaining six abhijnas,
(iv) of the four truths and of the acquisitions to be made in the four stages of sanctification.

The fourth section discusses the evil works and acts with their consequences and also explains vijnapti and avijnapti.

The fifth gives an exposition of the four constituents, and of those originating out of them, both internal and external.

The sixth section analyses the twenty two indriyas (predominant faculties) and the three spheres of existence
viz., kama, rupa, and arupa and explains in detail the sparsendriya, mula-citta etc.

The seventh is devoted to the mental states developed by an adept while he is in samādhi; and gradually advances from Sakadagami to Anagami stage.

The last and the eighth section explains the four smṛtyupasthana, the various wrong views, and similar other matters.

Another name of the Jñāna-prāsthana-sutra is Asta-grantha as it consists of eight chapters. It is related to Laukikagradharma (mind and mental states) consisting of eight chapters. Dr. Barua also says that, the Jñānaprāsthana-sutra may be parallel to the pāli text Patisambhidamagga. Though it seems a verbal resemblance between the two texts, the Jñānaprāsthana is written more on the lines of Dhammasangani than those of Patisambhidamagga.

Both Sanghabhadra and Vasubandhu, being critical of each other, followed the early Buddhist thought. The only difference was their approach. Vasubandhu had approach to the Mahayana Buddhism (the universal emptiness doctrine) by emphasizing the bija (saktivisesa), idea. The bija is the
inherent power to link with effect containing from existence to existence. The main concern of Vasubandhu is the psychological analysis and introspection. According to him the two steps are the two instruments for getting liberation of an individual. On the other hand, Sanghabhadra's theory is arrived at from two aspects i.e. the causality and actuality of time. He maintains that the two aspects of time are the necessary interpretations of human life. Sanghabhadra's interpretation is realistic and epistemological.

The philosophy of Asvaghosa is also realistic and epistemological. His philosophy is based on the theory of reality and proved only by the conventional truth. He supports the Mahayana doctrine of empirical or conventional truth, and denies the concept of Ultimate Reality. He utilises the traditional Twelve Links Chain of Causation to show the empirical truth. His Philosophy is separated from Vasubandhu and Sanghabhadra. Besides, he is not only a dramatist but also a poet philosopher. Like Asvaghosa Katyayaniputra also describes the distinction between real and unreal, absolute and conventional.
References:
2. Ibid.
4. Ibid.