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Tenets

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Mind Only

We may all be looking at the same object but from the Mind Only point of view as soon as your eye consciousness arises your unique predispositions are awakened. Each one of us has different predispositions. What I see is different to what you see and vice-versa, according to this school.

From this school's point of view when a group of people are reborn into the hell realm the cruel hellish environment, the hell sentries, the heat and cold of the hell realm will be triggered instantly because the minds which carry the predispositions giving rise to the manifestations becomes activated.

All this talk about whether there is an external object or not are processes put in place to move us toward the highest school viewpoint. The highest view says form is nothing more than what is merely labelled in dependence on the basis of designation. This is the highest school point of view. How does the discussion of the lesser schools lead us to that?

As we saw before the first two schools, Vaibashika and Sutra believe in external objects not dependent on mind. They are out there truly solidly existent, nothing to do with the mind.

The third school, Mind Only, says there are no such things as real external objects existing truly. They are nothing more than awakening of predispositions on the mind. Although the predisposition and the mind exist truly they say, external phenomena have something to do with the mind. It's almost as if they are saying they are labelled. (ED: this needs clarification)

The highest school says form does not exist even as a manifested entity of the mind because if you consider things as a substance of the mind you imply that that thing exists truly.

Does science believe in external objects?

A discussion follows re western physics.

(For the Buddhist schools) the issue of whether a thing is existent depends on the directionally partless particle. There is a debate. Suppose you break a form into smaller and smaller parts and supposedly come to a directionally partless particle, does that particle have a top side, a bottom side or left and right. If the particle is so small that the top and bottom ends have become nonexistent they would have collapsed into one. If so it goes against reasoning. Secondly if three particles meet contiguously doesn't the middle one touch a side of each of the ones on either side? That shows that each one has a left and a right side and therefore has parts. It is not a directionally partless particle.

The Mind Only school contends there are no externally truly existent objects because particles are not partless and therefore form cannot be composed of

partless particles, so form doesn't exist truly. Whereas the first two schools insist there are directionally partless particles.

Let this be a short discussion about whether there are external objects or not.

Question from Audience: ?

Now let me talk about self cognising awareness.

This has only consciousness as its object. It has only consciousnesses as its object of knowledge.

The line of argument by the Mind Only school to prove its existence is: When you develop a memory of an object or an event that you realise you experienced, at that time firstly the memory of the object surfaces. When you cognise a pot for example there are two things happening, two awarenesses; one, of *cognising* the pot; secondly, that *I* have cognised the vase. The school says you cannot have the second awareness had there not been another awareness. They say at the time when a pot is cognised there are the two awareness emerging. The second cognises the first awareness. The one that realises the first awareness that witnessed the pot cannot be the mind itself. It must be another, called self-cognising awareness. They say without this we would never have a memory. The first school argues that there is no such thing as an awareness knowing itself. They say that if an awareness were to cognise itself it would follow that light illumines itself. If so it would also follow that the darkness would envelop itself, in which case there would be no darkness in darkness.

This is a brief explanation about the existence of objects and negation or acceptance of self-cognising awareness in the different schools.

I will ask again next time.

What are the three features of a Buddhist school of thought?

Qualification as Buddhist practitioner must have 3 features:

- 1) Three Jewels are considered perfect objects of refuge.
- 2) No other object of refuge.
- 3) Must be proponent of one of the Buddhist schools of thought.

Defining features of the first 3 schools of thought are...

Vaibhashika: Do not believe in self-cognising awareness/consciousness
Believe in truly existent external phenomena.
Proponent of Hinayana.

Sutra: Believe in self-cognising awareness/consciousness.
Believe in truly existent external phenomena.
Proponent of Hinayana.

Mind Only Believe in self-cognising awareness/consciousness.
Do not believe in truly existent external phenomena.
Proponent of Mahayana.

What Proponent of thought is Buddha? The Middle Way school.

A discussion follows re what Buddha believed.

Each of the four schools of thought believe that their beliefs are correct and say that Shakyamuni Buddha also believed in their school of thought, but taught other tenets to help practitioners along the way.

It would be wrong to say that Buddha believed in all schools of thought.

There is no one person who is a proponent of all four schools.

If a proponent of any school meets the defining features of that school they become a proponent of that school.

How does Vaibashika define *ultimate truth*? Examples are the directionally partless particle and indivisible moments of consciousness so that when you mentally break it down in a reductionist way/analyse it or smash it into parts the initial idea/image of the object remains.

For them a house is a *conventional truth* because when all the parts are properly assembled you have an image of the house but when it is destroyed the house loses its identity and the image of a house is lost.

For Sutra school *ultimate truth* is that which can perform a function. All compounded/impermanent phenomena.

For them *conventional truth* is noncompounded/permanent phenomena because they cannot produce effects/perform a function.

[Geshe-la recommends we write the above in a small, separate notebook kept for writing down the basics, for easy reference to understanding the framework, which future discussions will be built on.]

What follows are summary exerts:

Schools that believe in truly existent external phenomena believe in directionally partless particles.

Chi-dun (spelling ?). *Chi*: out. *Dun*: objects. Meaning external objects that are truly existent, apart from mind.

Mind-Only school believe external phenomena are composed of pre-dispositions of mind, thus life is like a dream. External objects are nothing but awakenings of mental pre-dispositions. This is rejected by the Highest school, as it implies the objects exist truly [follow this up]. For the Highest school, form is a mere label dependent on the basis of designation.

Rang rig, self-cognising awareness/consciousness, has only consciousness as its object. For example, in memory there is: 1) awareness of object/event, 2) awareness of 'I' having this awareness. Mind Only say you can't have the second if it wasn't for another consciousness. Second awareness cognises first cognition. Mind Only school says one must have rang-rig to have memory. The first school refutes this (refer to recording).

Moving on...For Sutra school, all compounded phenomena arisen from causes are able to perform functions. They are ultimately real. [Review Sutra school's definitions of conventional and ultimate phenomena]