

26.3.2012 DBC Tenets/Drupta Geshe Jampa Tenzin

There are some new people here. Need to review. Before we finished last year I asked you to do some homework.

Questions from Geshela follow:

What is definition of Vaibashika school?

Answer: It is Hinayana, believes in outer realities and not in a self cognizing awareness. The lowest school.

Question: What is definition of sutra school?

Answer: Hinayana, believe in outer realities and self cognizing awareness. The next school up.

Question: What is definition of Mind Only school?

Answer: Mahayana, believe in self cognizing awareness and not in outer realities.

What is the definition of an ultimate truth for Mind Only?

Answer given was An arya meditating on emptiness. The exact definition is: a phenomenon which is directly and non-dualistically realized by a valid cognition.

Question: What is the definition of an ultimate truth for Vaibashika?

Answer: Cant be divided into smaller parts. An example is smallest directionally partless particle.

Question: an example of relative truth?

Answer: an impermanent phenomenon such as a pen.

Thank you but there is still some explanation to do about why is space is an ultimate truth for Vaibashika and why pen is relative truth for them.

Question: What are the three types of functional realities?

Answer: matter, consciousness and non-associated compositional factors

Question: An example of the last type?

Answer: anything that isn't matter or consciousness, eg, person

Question: Does Vaibashika contend rangrig/self cognizing awareness/

Answer: No

Question: Why not and if they do how would they explain it?

Answer: something about not being able to be both subject and object and a lamp not needing to illumine itself (not quite clear)

I'll accept that.

Question: can you think of a phenomenon which is ultimate truth for Vaibashika and not for Sutra school?

Answer: space

Question: What is Mind Only school definition?

Answer: it asserts self cognizing awareness, Mahayana

Question: Why are they called Mind Only?

Answer: because they believe that all things are of the nature of mind.

Question: Can you think of someone who was a proponent of Mind Only?

Answer: Vasubandu, Asanga's brother. Asanga founded the school but was not a proponent of Mind Only. His personal view is the view of Madhyamika because Asanga is said to have attained the third of the ten bodhisattva grounds.

Question: Why is Vasubandu a Mind Only proponent?

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Question and Answer session continued:

Answer: He was a Sutra School proponent then his brother Asanga taught him the Mind Only view and he became a proponent in the later part of his life.

Question: An example of conventional truth and one of ultimate truth for Mind Only?

Answer: Conventional truth example is all functional things/impermanent things like a vase. Subject/object duality does not exist for ultimate truth therefore non-existent whereas the truth has to be something that exists, therefore conventional truth must be something that exists. Example of ultimate truth is emptiness of duality, selflessness of person, true cessation.

Question: According to the Mind Only school there are the three natures?

Answer: dependent, imaginary and thoroughly established

Question: an example of the thoroughly established?

Answer:

Question: Definition of a Buddhist proponent of tenets

Answer: Takes refuge in the three jewels, Buddha, dharma and sangha and in nothing else and who follows tenets of Buddhism(conduct)

Question: Proponent of Madhyamika definition? Or Vaibashika?

Answer: Vaibashika is Hinayana, does believe in external phenomena and not in self cognizing awareness. Madhyamika is Mahayana, believes in non-entityness, not in external phenomena.

Question: Who is a proponent of Vaibashika?

Answer: One of the gurus of Atisha, Dharmarakshita/Serlingpa.

Are you clear about the definitions of the first three schools, Vaibashika, Sutra and Mind Only?

Tonight I will talk about the definition of Madhyamika Schools.

I feel that you need more detailed information about things. Next week I will ask everyone what the definitions of the four schools are. You need these under your belt.

Teaching continued on next page.

MIDDLE WAY SCHOOLS

Definition: A proponent is someone who doesn't assert true existence/who believes in non-entityness, and is a Mahayanist.

Subschools: Autonomist and Consequentialist

An Autonomist is a proponent who believes in the autonomy of the logical sign and who doesn't assert true existence.

What does this phrase mean? It means that they believe that the three modes of reasoning exist truly.

Examples of two proponents of this school are the Indian masters, Bhavaviveka and Shantirakshita.

A Consequentialist proponent is someone who believes in non-entityness and the logical consequences 'accepted by the debating partner'.

Examples of proponents of this school are the masters Chandrakirti and Buddhapalita.

A review so far

Generally Buddhist practitioners fall into four schools of thought. The reason for the four schools is to accommodate the stages of intellectual and philosophical development in terms of the right view. A school of thought whose view is said to be the coarsest is Vaibashika/ Proponents of Great Exposition.

When the philosophical outlook about the two truths becomes slightly more refined proponents are called followers of the Sautantrika/Sutra School.

These two schools only believe in selflessness of person. They do not believe in selflessness of phenomena. Selflessness means does not exist from its own side.

When the view becomes more refined the proponents of that philosophy are called Cittamatra/Mind Only followers.

The highest view is the fourth school called the Middle Way/Madhyamika. Their view about what is true in terms of conventional and ultimate truth is said to be the most subtle.

Why give such a variation of the view? The view must ultimately help us to overcome suffering. It is a belief of all Buddhists that whilst we want to be happy we aren't and this boils down to having negative psychological traits. Negative emotions like desire, hatred, jealousy and miserliness which cause suffering ultimately stem from a basic misconception about reality.

From a Buddhist perspective all negative emotions stem from a belief in ones mind, whether conscious or unconscious, that one and all other things exist in and of themselves. That has been called ignorance.

It can only be uprooted by a perspective that is diametrically opposed to it. That perspective has been called selflessness, the belief that things do not have selfhood. This notion has many layers. In the beginning one cannot come to terms with the final view of Madhyamika. As one trains, becoming exposed to the layered views of reality one becomes more at home with it. Until then one feels more comfortable with the lower schools of thought.

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Recap Definitions of the Four Schools:

Great Exposition/Vaibashika: Must meet three characteristics: First they do not believe in self cognizing awareness/rangrig. Secondly they do believe in outer realities/phenomena. Thirdly they must be a proponent of Hinayana.

Sutra/ Sautantrika: They believe in self cognizing awareness/rangrig, as well as in external realities/phenomena. They are a Hinayana school of thought.

Mind Only/Cittamatra: They do not believe in external phenomena. They believe in true existence of self cognizing awareness. They are Mahayana proponents.

Middle Way/Madhyamika Schools: They both believe in non-entityness. They do not believe in true existence/ are proponents of absence of true existence. They are Mahayana.

Review of What the Four Schools say About What a Person is:

For the majority of Vaibashika and the Sutra school a person is the continuum of his or her aggregates of body and mind. (A small Vaibashika subschool says; there is a substantially self sufficient existent person which is inexpressible because a person is neither permanent nor impermanent. Not all Vaibashika proponents believe this.)

For Mind Only a person is their foundation consciousness; they call it the 8th consciousness.

Proponents of Savatantrika-Madhyamika Autonomists say a person is his or her mental consciousness.

From the Prasangika-Madhyamika Consequentialist view point the person is a mere label affixed in dependence on the body and mind.

This is all for tonight. I am very pleased with your answers. Next Monday I am going to ask everyone the same question; what the definitions of the four schools are and what a person is according to each school. Then I'll cover definitions of the two truths for each school.