

We have covered first two schools Vaibashika (Great Exposition) and Sautantrika (Sutra School).

**Question:** Re Vaibashika's imagined phenomena, rabbits horn and sky flowers.

**Answer:** When Vaibashika gives instances of the horns of a rabbit and sky flowers these are *mere* imputations made by the conceptual mind. Otherwise they don't exist. Whereas for Vaibashika uncompounded space a substantially established entity in that it is one of the many examples of an ultimate truth.

**Question:** What is the experience of a meditator on path of seeing in relation to karma? What happens to karma after the 16 moments of path of seeing?

**Answer:** We need to make a distinction here. When a Mahayanist meditator reaches the path of seeing they become an Arya Bodhisattva. In their meditative session in which they enter the path of seeing they overcome 112 delusions pertaining to four truths. What about their karma? Their karma to be reborn in samsara is finished. They are liberated from samsara forever. They are free from being reborn in samsara although they are not arahats. For Hinayanists on their path of seeing, they overcome 112 distortions of four truths and yes their wisdom has consumed delusions, but their karma still remains. Although they are arya beings they are subject to be reborn in samsara, some of them seven times, some only twice before they get to be an arahat – and some will be in that same lifetime. There are different grades. Stream enterers, once returners, never returners are used to describe them. Only on becoming an arahat will they be free.

**Question:** Re non-existence being an ultimate truth? Horns of a rabbit is nonexistent, so can non-existents be ultimate truths for Vaibashika?

**Answer:** Truths, conventional and ultimate, must be existent. Horns of a rabbit and sky flowers are sheer figments of imagination. You can entertain the idea of them but they are not to be found outside your mind.

**Question:** What produces the difference in outcomes between a Mahayana arahat and a Hinayana arahat?

**Answer:** There are two points. 1) Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation, have a body of the truth of suffering, that is, it is born of previous karma, and therefore very much an instance of the truth of suffering. The arya bodhisattva on the last of the four stages of the path of preparation, the supreme dharma stage, develops confidence that they can gain some direct insight into emptiness and then they go into meditative absorption. One who has a body as a result of previous karma and who goes into that absorption becomes an arya being within that absorption because they gain direct insight into emptiness. Through this they attain a new body called a mental body which is unlike our afflicted body and not subject to rebirth. What is rebirth? Rebirth is this body born into samsara. Our afflicted aggregates of body and mind are samsara. We take it and are reborn into samsara again. Not so for arya bodhisattvas. An arya bodhisattva is born, not in samsara, but is born again as a result of the subtle energy of obstructions to omniscience. (There are two obstructions: to liberation and to omniscience). From the highest school viewpoint, both Hinayana and Mahayana aryas equally understand emptiness of inherent existence. In terms of their knowledge of emptiness there is no difference at all. There is no inferiority or superiority among them. Both have equal force. So how is it that the Hinayana might be reborn in samsara? It depends on what goes in tandem with that wisdom. Bodhisattvas have expansive and profound love and compassion resulting in bodhicitta which makes the whole difference.

So let us say we have covered the first two schools, Vaibashika and Sutra. Both believe in selflessness of person but not in selflessness of phenomena. They believe phenomena do have self existence.

**Tonight I am going to talk about the schools of Mahayana proponents.**

We believe we are Mahayanists. We even subscribe to tantra (we're in it to the highest degree). We are very strong about Mahayana as a valid teaching of the Buddha. This is challenged by the lower schools who say that Mahayana is not a Buddhist teaching. How can we convince them?

Modern scholars, in particular those with a scientific bent, say Mahayanists believe that the teaching is Buddhist because Nagarjuna established it. How did he manage to do this? Scientists say he went to subterranean depths to Naga land and retrieved the Prajna Paramita Sutra which he claimed was taught by the Buddha and so is valid. Mahayanists also believe Asanga went to a pureland to get scriptures from Maitreya which are Mahayanist and because of their origin are valid.

**Question:** Re Buddha having bodhicitta and so being a Mahayanist?

**Answer:** Geshela clarifies that Hinayana do not question the Mahayana path of love and compassion and so bodhicitta. They question the tenets of the Mahayana School.

**Mind Only School continued:**

All streams of teachings must be traceable to the source. Therefore we need to establish that the Mahayanist teachings have their source in the Buddha.

Vaibashika says Buddha has taught an entire body of teaching capable of supporting someone from an ordinary state to Buddhahood, and all that is presented in a system. You don't need anything more they say.

**Question:** Do they have the tripitaka?

**Answer:** Yes, they accept three pitakas – but Mahayana would qualify that by saying they accept three *Hinayana* tripitakas.

Major problem in establishing Mahayana school of thought, lies in four hundred year gap from Buddha's passing away until the teaching of Nagarjuna. Where is that Mahayana guru during that time? The Mahayana system believes in the extensive path from Maitreya to Asanga and the profound path from Nagarjuna but what about the 400 year gap? Who gave these teachings to Nagarjuna? Where is the unbroken succession of the line of Mahayana gurus? The Hinayana claim their succession through the seven trustees from Mahakashapa on down an unbroken lineage to their current masters is proof of their teachings' validity.

For Mahayana there is a perceived problem with proof of a lineage for Mahayana teachings.

**Question:** How about, it is due to Buddha's prophecy of the coming of Nagarjuna?

**Answer:** Vaibashika would not accept that. They only believe discourses given in Pali – not those teachings of Buddha given in Sanskrit. Nagarjuna's prophesy is from Descent into Lanka Sutra, a Sanskrit text and not a Hinayana sutra. Modern day scholars of Hinayana say Nagarjuna was very smart and concocted these ideas.

**Question:** Did not Buddha have Bodhisattva disciples Samantabhadra, etc.?

**Answer:** Vaibashika and Sutra school proponents say he taught teachings of the four truths and all others in Pali language, whereas the divine language of Sanskrit was not used to teach. They say that the Prajna Paramita Sutra is a belief of Mahayanists. Mahayana sutras were taught in Sanskrit, for only beings of Mahayana disposition. Mahayana teachings were not taught publicly to the world audience. They were *pure vision teachings*.

We need a two pronged defense. Firstly we need to establish Mahayana was indeed taught by Buddha.

Secondly we need to establish that the lineage from Buddha to Nagarjuna was not broken.

We like to believe we are Mahayanists, yet huge numbers out there dispute that these are valid teachings. If we were all in Tibet we could rest on our laurels because Tibet is a safe zone for Mahayanists, but we are not.

**Question:** Time and space is a limited concept so the four hundred years would dissolve and the gap becomes immaterial?

**Answer:** That is speaking from an ultimate truth point of view which does not go down well with the world which is so tied up with conventions. It is widely believed Buddha's teachings including Mahayana are 2,500 years old. How do we account for the 400 year gap to Nargajuna?

**Question:** Re how did he get the teachings and re Pali cannon origin?

**Answer:** We have to account for the line of succession. We are wracking our brain but haven't found the answer yet.

**Question:** Re Padmasambava?

**Answer:** Guru Rinpoche, Padmasambava and Shantirakshita were contemporaries who appeared much later than Nargajuna.

**Question:** Re Hinayana sutra being very direct and down to earth. Many Mahayana teachings, visionary teachings, were not spoken by Buddha, but passed through Manjushri. Avalokiteshvara, Shantideva and so on. Although not directly from Buddha's speech these were undoubtedly Buddhist.

We have to become critical Buddhists who account for what we believe in. We can't simply maintain the status quo of the good old days. People these days are analyzing more and more critically so we need to give them a satisfactory account.

Both lower schools have presented many objections to the truth that the Mahayana was taught by the Buddha. Mahayana tenets say no phenomena have existence through the power of their defining characteristics, their intrinsic existence. Hinayanists say; "If things don't have characteristics from their own side then nothing would exist at all and you would fall into nihilism".

We need to establish that the Mahayana was taught by Buddha by relying on logic and reasoning. We must make it clear that all Buddhists believe Buddha is the supreme guide who showed the path to eradicate suffering. Both vehicles believe that to do this you must eradicate samsara. To do this you must eradicate the root of samsara/mundane existence.

**Mind Only School continued:**

Here we need to critique whether characterized/ intrinsic existence is grounded in reality or not; more importantly, whether the mind that believes in characterized existence is correct or not. Then we can prove the mind grasping at characterized existence is mistaken.

We also can establish via reasoning that desire, hatred etc arise from grasping at a conception of characterized existence. From these two you perform various karmas due to which you are reborn in samsara- something we can prove. In order to render the conception of grasping at characterized existence as incorrect, we need to see there is no such thing as characterized existence. Once the conceived object is negated then the mind that believes in it will naturally go away. If Buddha did not teach a way of eradicating characterized existence the fallacy arises that Buddha didn't teach the way out of samsara. Mahayana teachings believe all phenomena lack intrinsic existence. Believing in such a misconception is the root of the suffering of samsara. If Buddha did not teach an antidote to help eradicate the mind grasping at characterized existence, there would be a great fallacy – that he came to eradicate suffering but did not deliver the means.

If we go along this line do you think we can establish the Mahayana teaching is valid? It is hard because there is no recorded historical information of the lineage of Nagarjuna. This approach is the line of reasoning to validate that the Mahayana was taught by the Buddha. This is the first proof.

The next question is the lineage gap of 400 years between Nagarjuna and Buddha.

To address this problem we need to revisit the song.yuum/oral transmission. Nargajuna's early guru at Nalanda was Akshya-Karmabadra. He was Buddhist teacher of Nalanda who had direct one to one communication with Manjushri. As for Manjushri – he was among the main direct disciples of Buddha- among the audience. Since Nagarjuna was taught by Akshya Karmabadra who had direct lineage with Manjushri we say Nagarjuna, who is founder of the profound path, had connection with the source, Manjushri.

This is Mahayana's wing of the profound. For the wing of the extensive it is common knowledge that Arya Asanga meditated for a long time on Maitreya Buddha. After 12 years he did see Maitreya and was taken to Tushita Pure land by Maitreya, who is considered one of the eight prominent bodhisattva disciples of Buddha. So Asanga had direct connection with the extensive path through Maitreya who was a direct disciple of Buddha.

These are brief descriptions of the accounts. There is much more to this debate.

Please note down Hinayana criticism:

1. Mahayana discourses are not within three pitakas.
2. Mahayana does not fall into any of the eighteen schools views and practices of Vaibashika
3. Mahayana talks about Sambogakaya /enjoyment form of Buddha as permanent, yet it is a physical body of a Buddha. They say if physical then it goes against the salient point of all compounded phenomena as impermanent.
4. Mahayana discourses are not among teaching gathered by the conveners of teaching of Buddha.
5. Mahayana says Shakyamuni is an emanation and that, they say, is wrong.
6. Next criticism is that ordained should prostrate to the lay at times. Because a Bodhisattva is a superior being as opposed to an ordinary being, therefore even an ordained being should prostrate to a lay bodhisattva. That is really taboo, a real no no.
7. Mahayana praises the Bodhisattva, more than Buddha
8. Mahayana teaches that karma even with definite consequences can be rendered null and void.
9. If dharmata, the true nature of reality, taught in discourses about the 16 attributes of the four truths were not the real dharmata was else could be more real/greater than that?
10. Mahayanists talk about such a thing as Buddha nature/Tathagatagarba as encompassing everything and also about a receiving consciousness which is a foundation consciousness, which is wrong.

Now you know so next time come with the valid arguments.

The works of Bhavaviveka and Shantideva, have sections dedicated to establishing Mahayana as the word of the Buddha. Although this has been slightly drawn out, I wanted to get you to wrack your brains so you retain things better. His Holiness says hope for the best and prepare for the worst. You may be challenged in the future that what you believe is Buddhism is not real Buddhism. Need to have answers up our sleeve.