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Drup.ta /Tenets

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Mind Only School and start of Middle Way School

Question: Re intended meanings and time? Why did Buddha say that if you do such and such a practice that you will get to a Buddha realm, when the definitive meaning is not this literally?

Answer: If one hears one will be reborn in Sukavati Pure land one will generate strong wish to develop practice to be reborn there. In time one will be reborn there. They will be kept on course.

Question: re emotions?

Answer: There is no Tibetan word for emotions. Emotions are consciousness and time is a non-associated compositional factor. There are two kinds of non-associated compositional factors; with life faculty and without life faculty. All sentient beings are non-associated compositional factors with life force. Plants are matter. Lifeless examples of non-associated compositional factor are instances of time like day, week, month year etc.

What are the three distinguishing features of Vaibashika?

They are a Hinayana school, they believe in existence of external objects and don't believe in self cognizing awareness.

Sutra school believes in the external existence of objects, in self cognizing awareness and are Hinayana.

Mind Only school believes in self-cognising awareness, does not believe in truly existent external phenomenon, and are Mahayana proponents.

What are the defining features of a proponent of a Buddhist school of thought? They take refuge in the three jewels, don't turn to any other refuge and are a proponent of Buddhist tenets.

What is the Vaibashika ultimate truth? That which cannot be broken down any further such as the directionally partless particle of matter and smallest moment of consciousness. Vaibashika conventional truth, is a thing which when broken or analysed loses its identity/image eg; pot which has been broken is no longer a pot— so the image can not withstand destruction.

Sutra school:- Conventional truth is all permanent things because they cannot produce an effect/perform a function. An example of ultimate truth is a vase/ a compounded/impermanent/real/functional phenomena (things which perform functions/produce an effect).

How is someone said to believe in external phenomena and how does someone believe in self cognizing awareness? If phenomena are posited as truly existent then the directionally partless particle is posited. If a self cognizing awareness is posited it cognizes an earlier one remembering something. It not only cognizes the memory of the object but also the first mind remembering it.

What is the process of taking three jewels as perfect refuge? When one believes dharma of Buddha is the right path, that it has the capacity to end all suffering and bring about real happiness. Conviction in this you are convinced of Buddha and take three objects of refuge as non-fraudulent.

Is it a position of a holder of a school of thought to take three jewels as perfect refuge? Yes. If so do you also accept the position that to eat, drink wear clothes and go to work, are also tenets? No because they are not especially Buddhist things. If you accept impermanence is it a position of a school of thought? If it is not a position of a school of thought then is the acceptance of person as permanent a tenet? What is a tenet of a proponent of non Buddhist schools of thought?

To cut to the chase: Acceptance of permanence and impermanence are examples of schools of thought.

The Middle Way School.

(Buy a small notebook to get the fundamental skeleton information about schools of thought – features of basics of school.)

Two features: 1) They don't believe even conventionally in any true existence. 2) They are Mahayana proponents.

Definitions of two truths summary:

1st school, Vaibashika sees conventional truth as phenomena whose image you lose when it is mentally broken down or physically destroyed – at the end the mind loses the image., eg; a house. This is a conventional truth for them. Oppositely ultimate truth for the 1st school is object whose image you don't lose even after physical destruction or mental reduction of its parts, eg. the directionally partless particle.

Middle Way School

Summary of two truths for each school continued:

According to Sutra school ultimate truth is a phenomenon ultimately (really, actually) able to perform a function. An example is all compounded phenomena, eg, a house. Conventional truth is a phenomenon not actually/ ultimately able to perform a function – yet it exists. It is all noncompounded/permanent phenomena, eg; space.

According to Mind Only School; ultimate truth is phenomena which are non-dually realized by a valid cognizer, which perceives/ apprehends it. A conventional truth is a phenomenon dualistically perceived by a valid cognizer apprehending it. There are phenomena that are correctly understood by subsequent cognizers which are not prime/valid but they understand their objects correctly also.

Middle Way/Madhyamika School

Definition of two truths; Ultimate truth is a phenomenon, which is found by an ultimate analyzing consciousness and to which the ultimate cognizing/examining/investigating/valid consciousness serves as such to it. This is a detailed clause. All different consciousnesses of Buddha – mental, sensory etc are ultimate gauging/analyzing/valid consciousnesses. The emphasis is in the second clause ‘the ultimate cognition in relation to the object serves as such to the phenomenon’.

For Mind Only the key part of the ultimate truth definition is that it is cognized non-dually. For Madhyamika it is that it becomes the ultimate cognizing consciousness.

Elaborating on these speaking first on middle way – Proponents of Buddhism would believe Buddha has omniscience which realizes, among other phenomena, the vase. Such a mind of the Buddha is both an ultimate finding consciousness and relative truth finding consciousness. Why then would that become ultimate analyzing? Buddha’s mind is indeed an ultimate analyzing valid cognition because it understands the ultimate emptiness of inherent nature of the vase. The same consciousness is the relative finding omniscience in that it also finds the vase itself. Ultimate truth and conventional truth are of the same nature but are of different nominalities.

Examples of the two truths

Examples of an ultimate truth for Vaibashika is the indivisible partless, particle and indivisible moments of consciousness. Our mental consciousness has parts; today’s mental consciousness, yesterdays, this morning’s, this evening’s, and then they can be broken down to this minute, then a nano second. In this way the mental consciousness can be broken down into different parts and then we get to such a miniscule moment that can’t be broken down or else you will kill consciousness, they say.

Space is another example of ultimate truth for Vaibashika because the image of it is indestructible. From Vaibashika it depends on whether the mental image of it is lost or not.

The omniscient mind of Buddha is an example of ultimate truth for Vaibashika. Even if you break it down to a billionth of a billionth omniscient mind is always omniscient.

Are there any more examples? Light? That is debatable. Radio waves? Debatable too. There are innumerable objects of knowledge.

Relative truth examples are objects whose image is lost when the object is deconstructed such as flowers, vases, houses.

We’ll stop here tonight. Next week I’ll ask questions about Sutra school ultimate and conventional examples as well as paths and stages. Please bring your small booklet.

Any Questions?

Question: Other examples of ultimate truth?

Answer: consciousnesses, permanence, products, impermanence which always remain so. Consciousness may be broken down to small parts but even the smallest part is still consciousness. These things cannot become non. Impermanence is always impermanence. Compounded phenomena is always compounded. A product is always a product. Examples of conventional truth are houses, mountains, pot, flower etc. If you break them down into sections the initial mountain disappears and with it your idea of the mountain also disappears.

Question: How does Middle Way School talk about moments?

Answer: They do believe in indivisible moments of consciousness. But however small it is not partless, it is always composed of parts. That it can't be reduced any further doesn't mean that it is partless. Just because it can't be broken down any further it still does have parts.

Question: Is it permanent?

Answer: They are impermanent according to Middle Way school. At the particle level things are always in flux. If one particle is taken away when it is contiguous with another one then the first particle moves away. Things are in motion at a very subtle level. Things are really impermanent. At the moment we are sitting down, the moment we get up the sitting down part has disappeared. If you apply this to a moment; two moments adjacent to one another, one flowing into the other, when the first moment ceases the second moment has arisen. With the arising of the second moment in a nano second the first moment has ceased. We breathe in and the moment you breathe out that breathing in ceases and vice versa. That is why all compounded phenomena are momentary.