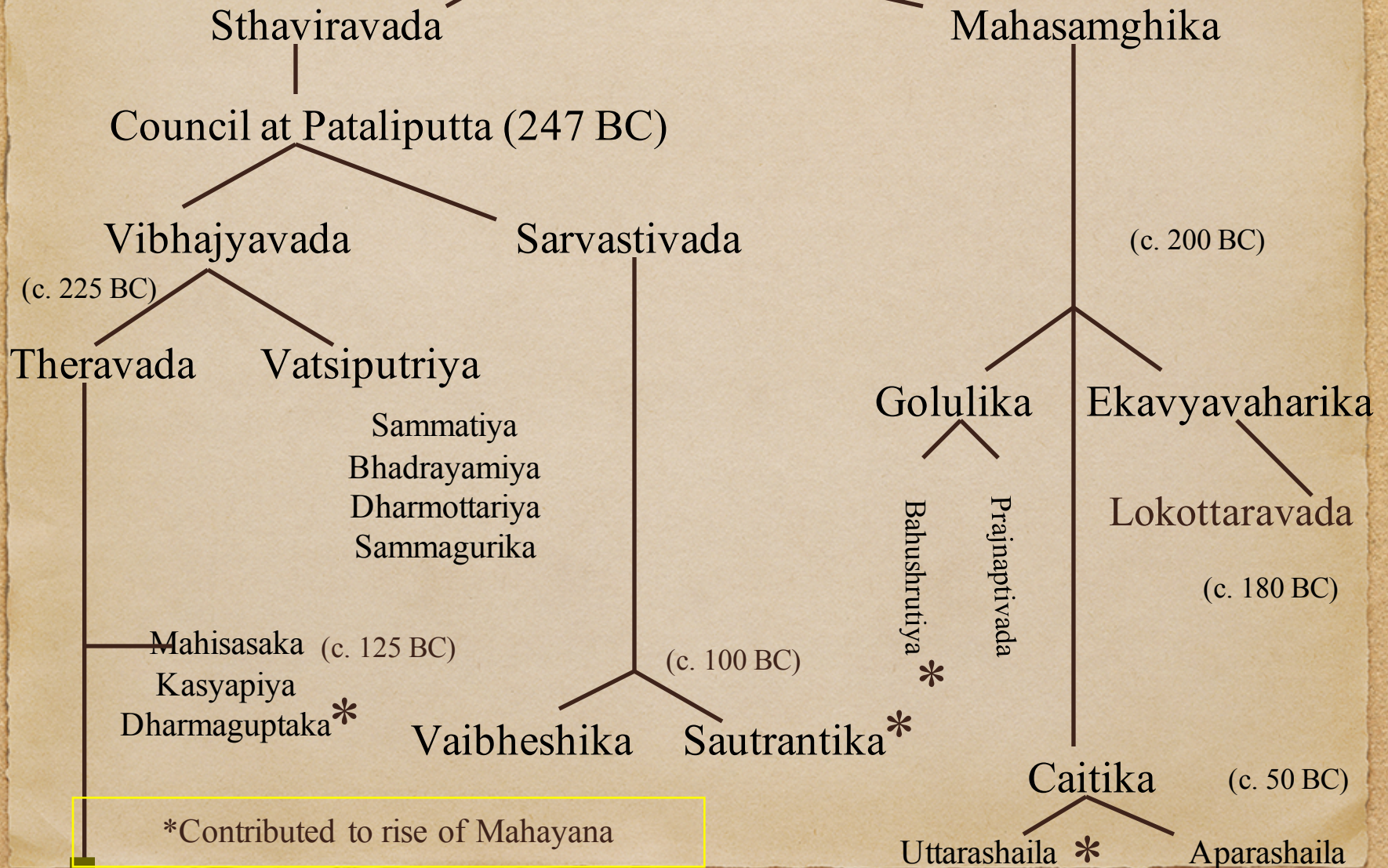


The Rise of the Mahayana



Council at Vaisali (383 BC)

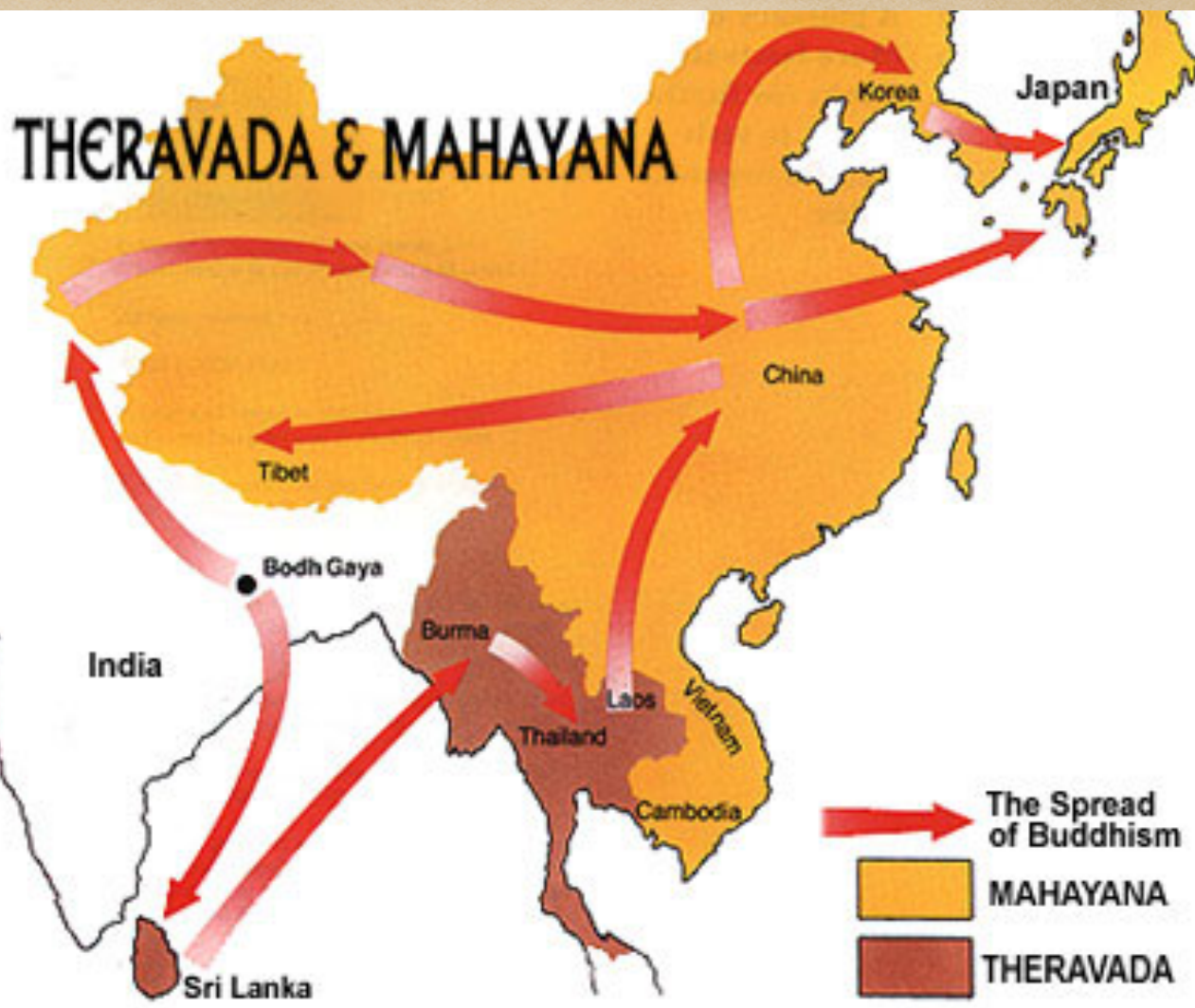


*Contributed to rise of Mahayana

Emergence....

'We see an non-theistic, soul-denying philosophic teaching of a path to personal Final Deliverance comprising the absolute end, and a simple worship of the memory of its human founder, superseded by a magnificent High Church with a Supreme Being, sorrouned by a host of Celestial Beings - a religion highly devotional, highly ceremonial and clerical, with an ideal of Universal Salvation of all living creatures, Salvation not in annihilation, but in eternal life, we are fully justified in maintaining that the history of religions has scarcely witnessed such a break between new and old within the pale of what hevertheless continued to claim common descent from the same religious founder'

Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, Stcherbatsky



The Mahasanghika

- The Mahasanghika (great assembly)
- Arose as a liberal movement
- Provided a vehicle for the lay community
- The 'Three Classes of Disciple':
 - Sravaka, Pratyeka, Bodhisattva

What is the Mahāyāna?

- New interpretations of the Buddha's original teaching that emerged around the first century BCE in (in Gandhara?) in the form of texts known as the *Prajñāparamitā* ('Perfection of Wisdom')
- Not a schism as such within Buddhism since formal schisms are based on disagreements over Vinaya (rules for monks and nuns) rather than doctrines
- So, monks and nuns of Śravakāyāna and Mahāyāna orientation both side by side in same monasteries
- Question often of orientation of practice rather than separate schools
- Greater emphasis on lay practitioners rather than monks and scholastics. Various Mahāyāna *sūtras* present the 'new' teachings as being expounded by lay people, women, children to very well educated monks who cannot comprehend it as they are too attached to their status
- Reworking of the main spiritual aspiration from the *arhat* (individual realiser) to the *bodhisattva* and sama-sambuddhasa

The Mahayana: Three Cycles of Doctrine

1. The Hinayana – the “Lesser Vehicle” in Mahayana conception.

The doctrine of no individual self.

2. The Madhyamaka – the “Middle Way School.”

The teaching of no self for external phenomena, no self-existence for subject/object or consciousness.

3. The Yogacara/Cittamatra – the “Yoga-praxis”/Mind-only school

The doctrine of the ultimate nature of consciousness

Great Enlightenment

- The goal of Mahayana is the Great Enlightenment
- The enlightenment of all beings
- The Way is 'Bodhichitta' – the compassionate wish to serve the liberation of all beings.



The Bodhisattva Ideal

- The Bodhisattva as the embodiment of realisation
- Committed to the enlightenment of all sentient beings
- The great Bodhisattvas embody different aspects of enlightenment
- Manjusri embodies wisdom, Avalokitesvara embodies compassion
- But a Bodhisattva might be anyone!

The Mahayana Outlook

Philosophy:

- The universe is infinitely vast in space and time
- Sunyata and Conditioned Arising
- All dharmas are empty
- The non-difference of samsara & nirvana

The nature of the Buddha

- Buddha Nature
- Trikaya

Trikaya

- In the Mahayana the 'Buddha' signifies the Supreme, Ultimate reality
- It is understood that ultimate reality manifests in accordance to the realisation of the Perceiver.
- This is called the doctrine of 'trikaya' or 'Three bodies'

The 'Three Bodies'

- Dharmakaya – 'Truth Body' (ultimate reality underlying the whole universe realised by the Buddha)
- Sambhogakaya – 'Enjoyment Body' (The way that reality appears to the bodhisattva. Manjushri is an exemplar of sambhogakaya)
- Nirmanakaya – 'Form Body' (The way ordinary beings experience ultimate reality – the appearance of Sakyamuni was in the nirmanakaya)

The Three Natures In Yogacara

The “conceptualized nature”
of reality

1. **Parikalpitasvabhava**

The “interwoven with other
nature” of reality

2. **paratantrasvabhava**

The “completed” or
“perfected nature” –
known by a Buddha or
Aryan bodhisattva in
meditative equipoise

3. **parinispannasvabhava**

The Eight Consciousnesses of Yogacara Tradition

1- 5. The Five Sense consciousnesses

6. The Mental consciousness - Manovijnana
7. The Ego consciousness - Manas
8. The Repository or Basal foundation consciousness -
 Alayavijnana

The Six Perfections

1. dāna-pāramitā: the perfection of giving
2. śīla-pāramitā: the perfection of behavior and discipline
3. kṣānti-pāramitā: the perfection of forbearance
4. vīrya-pāramitā: the perfection of vigor and diligence
5. dhyāna-pāramitā: the perfection of meditation
6. prajñā-pāramitā: the perfection of transcendent wisdom

Buddha Nature

- In the third turning of the wheel. The Buddha stated that the ultimate nature of reality is the Buddhahood. The Dharmakaya.
- This ultimate nature was the ultimate nature of every single being.
- All beings have 'Buddha Nature'
- They simply need to realise the true nature of their own mind and they would become a Buddha.

Conditioned Origination

- No particular has own-being (svabhava)
- Nothing either 'is' or 'is not'
- 'Is' generates the eternalist view
- 'Is not' generates the nihilist view
- Both of these are wrong views
- Living beings do not understand the conditioned nature of existence due to attachment

Cittamattara: Mind Only

- Karma and karmic fruition is all in Mind
- Mind/Cognition is real - material objects not real in themselves
- Buddha-nature as inherently zestful, creative, loving, wise... but... obscured by hatred, ignorance and desire

Madhyamaka

Sunyavada vs. Realism of Abhidharma: 'All Dharmas are Empty'

Language itself is 'prapanca' or 'vikalpa'

If we must speak it is to say that the real is 'Tathata' [suchness, just-so]

'Silence of the Buddha' is the key teaching

YES: Conventional Truth vs. Ultimate Truth

NAGARJUNA is a brave De-Constructivist

who reduced all asserted "truths" to ultimate falsity...depending on the "web of assumptions and conventions"

UP vs. DOWN

INSIDE vs. OUTSIDE

....even vs. Buddhist formulations... **SUCH AS NIRVANA vs SAMSARA**

All Utterance is falsity; based on conceptual assumptions

Core Mahayana Sutras

1. Prajñā-paramita Sutra
2. Prajñā-paramita Heart Sutra
3. Vajrachedika Prajñā-paramita Sutra
4. 1008 Verse Prajñā-paramita Sutra
5. ...and many others....

From the Heart Sutra

Avalokitasvara, the Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the Wisdom which has gone beyond.

He looked down from on high, He beheld but five heaps, and He saw that in their own-being they were empty.

form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form ;

emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form,
all dharmas are marked with emptiness ;

they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete.

No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind ; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind; No sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to :

No mind-consciousness element ; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to :
: There is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping,
no path.

There is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.

OM GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

Nagarjuna

- Sometimes called the 'Second Buddha'
- Born to a Brahmin family in South or Central India around 2nd Century C.E.
- Joined the Sangha as a child
- Trained in the Abhidharma
- (reading



MADHYAMIKA

- Madhyamika founded by Nagarjuna (c. 150-250 C.E.)
- Truth of Śūnyatā (which is ineffable) can only be realized through direct insight - 'realizing emptiness' is the goal of the path
- Language is helpful but inadequate; it cannot get at the nature of reality which is beyond discursive analysis
- Middle path between intellectual views of 'existing' or 'not existing'
 - Reductio ad absurdum argument (cf. Socrates)
 - All the implications of the opponent's thesis unacceptable in light of the opponents own assumptions; radical criticism. Nagarjuna:
 - Identifies point of view
 - Assumes point of view
 - Then reduces it to absurdity

NAGARJUNA (CONT.)

- All intellectual views can be reduced to having no basis since they have dependently originated
 - cannot be evaluated on own terms
 - Thus have no validity
- Not a rejection of reason; rather reason as tool to be discarded
- All views have partial reality; none capture the whole truth
- What is ultimately true cannot be reached by intellectual arguments but only realised
- Eventually after reduction to absurdity, we are left with 'emptiness'

Abhidharmika Schools

- These schools taught a ‘realistic’ philosophy where ‘dharmas’ were ‘truly existing causes’
- For example, the causal effectiveness of water or fire.
- They taught the radical difference of Samsara and Nirvāṇa

- . 1. The Buddha is our only Master (teacher and guide)
- . 2. We take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha (the Three Jewels)
- . 3. We do not believe that this world is created and ruled by a God
- . 4. We consider that the purpose of life is to develop compassion for all living beings without discrimination and to work for their good, happiness, and peace; and to develop wisdom (panna) leading to the realization of Ultimate Truth
- . 5. We accept The Four Noble Truths, namely dukkha, the arising of dukkha, the cessation of dukkha, and the path leading to the cessation of dukkha; and the law of cause and effect
- . 6. All conditioned things (saṃskāra) are impermanent (anicca) and dukkha, and that all conditioned and unconditioned things are without self (anatta)
- . 7. We accept the 37 factors of enlightenment as different aspects of the Path taught by the Buddha leading to Enlightenment.
- . 8. There are three ways of attaining bodhi or Enlightenment: namely as a disciple (śrāvaka), as a pratyekabuddha and as a sammasambuddha (perfectly and fully enlightened Buddha). We accept it as the highest, noblest, and most heroic to follow the career of a Bodhisatta and to become a sammasambuddha in order to save others.
- . 9. We admit that in different countries there are differences regarding Buddhist beliefs and practices. These external forms and expressions should not be confused with the essential teachings of the Buddha.

Analysis of Causation

Does it make any sense to imagine that there are causes without effects or conditions without that which is conditioned?

Don't the ideas of cause & effect go together, i.e., mutually imply each other?

Isn't that also the case with conditions & the conditioned?

Analysis of Causation...

Suppose that no thing is real: then nothing can arise from nothing.

Suppose that only eternal & unchanging essences are real. Essences neither come into being nor pass out of being. So nothing can arise.

Now, whatever arises must be caused to arise. But if “nothing whatever arises,” then nothing is caused.

Analysis of Causation...

If things do not arise, then there can be no conditions of arising.

If nothing arises, then the idea of conditions from which things arise has no application; conditions are not conditions.

So . . .

there are neither causes

nor conditions (1.4) (if either essentialism or nihilism is true).

Analysis of Causation...

The same argument applies to the conditions from which things arise:

- If things do not arise, then there can be no conditions of arising.
- If nothing arises, then the idea of conditions from which things arise has no application; conditions are not conditions.
- So there are neither causes nor conditions (if essentialism or nihilism is true)

Analysis of Causation...

- 1.6 Since neither being nor non-being can arise, neither can be caused or conditioned.
- 1.7 If absolutely nothing exists (nihilism), then there can be no causes (or conditions) since causes would be something rather than nothing.
- 1.8 Can there be uncaused & unconditioned events? If so, why do we need the ideas of cause & condition at all? What does “effect” mean? Doesn’t “effect” logically imply cause & condition? So that if there are effects, there must be causes & conditions, which makes both essentialism & nihilism (which imply no causes or conditions) false.

The Two Truths In Madhyamika Philosophy

Samvrti

(Conventional Truth)

The world of linguistic or
verbal expression

Paramartha

(Ultimate Truth)

The 'inconceivable truth'
known by Buddhas and
Arya bodhisattvas