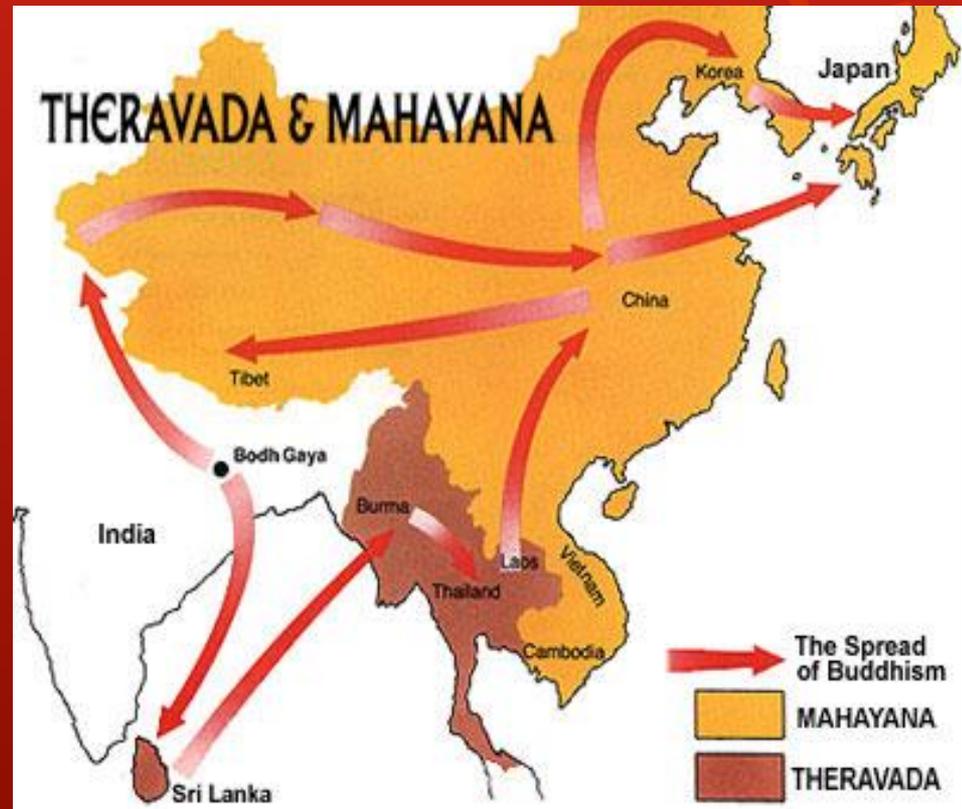


Madhyamaka and Yogacara

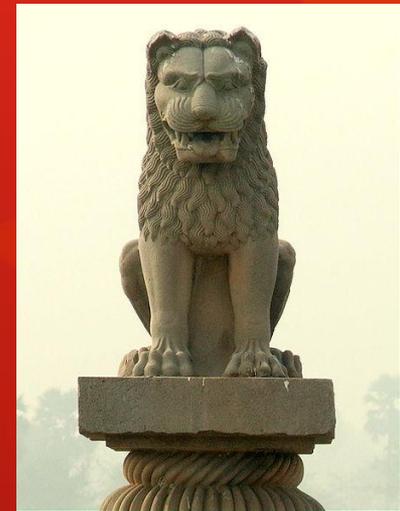
Buddhism II

After Siddhartha

- Buddhism split into two major traditions:
Theravada & Mahayana
 - Theravada – the doctrine of the elders
 - Mahayana – the “large raft/vehicle” also called “the great course” – more popular and designed for laypeople as well as scholars.



After Siddhartha: Theravada



- Core text: The *Pali Canon*
- Key focus: *Prajna* – wisdom
- Life style: emphasis on monastic life, with strict adherence to the *vinaya* – rules of conduct.
- Ideal: the *Arhant* – “Noble one” or being of perfect knowledge
- Primary schools:
 - Abhidharmists - Described self in terms of elements called *Dharmas*. Two categories: *Nama*: Mental processes/*Rupa*: bodily processes – these should be compared to energy rather than mass – they have no duration nor extension. This school included many subgroups some of which are the Sarvastivadins, Sautrantikas, and Vaibhashikas.
 - Pudgalavadins – worked on the concept of the pudgala or self which *correlated* with the elements – this person performed the task of memory, continuity, enlightenment, etc.

After Siddhartha: Mahayana

- Core text: *The Prajnaparamita*
- Key focus: *Karuna* – compassion
- Lifestyle: both laypersons and monks – many laypersons spend early years as monks & nuns before becoming householders & parents
- Ideal: the *Bodhisattva* – or being of infinite compassion
- Primary schools:
 - Mahyamaka – analysis of shunyata
 - Yogacara – analysis of consciousness



The Qualities of the Bodhisattva:



Mural of Padmapani from Ajanta Caves, India, 5th century

- To become a buddha, a bodhisattva has to practice six perfections (paramita):
 - the perfection of giving (dana paramita)
 - the perfection of morality (shila-paramita)
 - the perfection of patience (kshanti-paramita)
 - the perfection of energy (virya-paramita)
 - the perfection of meditation (dhyana-paramita)
 - the perfection of wisdom (prajna-paramira)

- http://www.national-geographic.ru/ngm/200801/article_168/gallery_1394/

The Rise of Mahayana Philosophy

- Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajnaparamita*) Texts
 - Diamond Sutra – The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion – focus on interdependent arising
 - Heart Sutra – focus on emptiness

Painting of Prajnaparamita personified. Sanskrit Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra manuscript written in the Ranjana script. Nalanda, Bihar, India. Circa 700-1100 CE.



Madhyamaka Overview

- Name means “Middle Way” because neither nihilism (nothing exists) nor realism (everything self-exists & is permanent) is endorsed
- Founded by Nagarjuna in 2nd C. BCE
- Method of analysis is the “critical dialectic” or “*reductio ad absurdum*” logical form of reasoning (latin for “reduction to the absurd”)
- Explanation of reality focused on “*shunyata*”



Nagarjuna's Method:



- the "critical dialectic" or "*reductio ad absurdum*"
- "*Reductio ad absurdum* is a mode of argumentation that seeks to establish a contention by deriving an absurdity from its denial, thus arguing that a thesis must be accepted because its rejection would be untenable."
(Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy)
- Nagarjuna applies this method to claims about: causality, motion, self, the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths and nirvana.
- Following is an example of this method applied to causation.

Nagarjuna's Method:



Argument against causation:

- P1) Either an effect produces itself or is produced by something other than itself, or both produces itself and is produced by something other than itself or it is produced without a cause.
- P2) an effect cannot produce itself because then the cause and effect would be identical which is to deny causality entirely
- P3) the idea that an effect is produced by something entirely different than itself implies that it would be impossible to have a causal relationship between two fundamentally different things
- P4) the idea that an effect is both produced by itself and something else is just a conjunct of the first two ideas (P2 & P3) so since they have been shown to be false so must their conjunct be false
- P5) the last idea that nothing can produce something is also to abandon causality entirely.
- _____
- C) Causality based on the independence of cause and effect is absurd

Nagarjuna's Conclusions



□ On Sunyata:

"Empty" should not be asserted.

"Non-empty" should not be asserted.

Neither both nor neither should be asserted.

They are only used nominally.

Fundamental Verses, Chapter 22, verse 11

□ On Interdependent Arising

"Whoever sees interdependent arising also sees dukkha, its arising, its cessation, and also the path."

Fundamental Verses, Chapter 24, verse 18

Yogacara Overview

- Founded by Asanga (ca.365-440 BCE) and his brother, Vasubandhu (ca 380-460 BCE)
- Name from *yoga* - discipline and *cara* – practice
- Focus principally on analysis of consciousness and knowledge
- Emphasis placed on things as “tathata” – things are what they are such as they are



Yogacara on Knowledge



- Three Aspects of Knowledge – how a thing can be known:
 - Through conceptual constructs – these are signs that point at the thing but are not the thing itself
 - Through conditioning by other things – understanding how that thing relates, arises, & inter-exists with other things – still conceptual though & not the thing itself
 - As it is in itself – such as it is – tathata – free from conceptual constructs

Yogacara on Consciousness



- Knowledge is a function of consciousness so to understand the former, the Yogacara analyzed the latter.
- Two Kinds of Consciousness:
 - Ordinary, discursive & dualistic consciousness – subject and object are thought of as separate though the relationship of knower and known is identified – in this way it can be defiled through grasping and attaching
 - Store or Seed Consciousness – *alaya vijnana* – this is the well from which ordinary consciousness arises and back into which it subsides – like a storehouse or repository of thought and experience. In itself, it is free from dualism and discursiveness. This idea can be used to explain the continuity of personality, of memory & of karma/kamma

Yogacara on Knowing the World



- Three Foundations of Knowledge:
 - Knowledge based on shared opinion and general correspondence to practice
 - Knowledge based on scientific testing
 - Knowledge free from discursiveness & personal defilements – insight/direct experience of reality in itself – no subject/object distinction – also called the knowledge of the Bodhisattvas & Buddhas