

Prologue to the Flower Adornment Sutra

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The Sixth Door: Pervasiveness and Uniqueness of the School and Aim

continued from Issue #212

PROLOGUE:

THE FIRST IS THE SCHOOL OF THE EXISTENCE OF BOTH SELF AND DHARMAS, THAT IS, THE VATSIPUTRIYA SECT AND SO FORTH. IT ESTABLISHES THREE ASSEMBLAGES, THE FIRST BEING THAT OF THE CONDITIONED, THE SECOND THAT OF THE UNCONDITIONED, AND THE THIRD, THE ASSEMBLAGE OF NEITHER—"NEITHER" BEING THE SELF. IT ALSO ESTABLISHES FIVE STORES OF DHARMAS. THREE OF THOSE ARE THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME, THE FOURTH IS THE UNCONDITIONED, AND THE FIFTH IS THE STORE OF THE INEFFABLE IN WHICH THE SELF RESIDES, SINCE THE INEFFABLE IS BOTH CONDITIONED AND UNCONDITIONED, FURTHERMORE, ALL THE SHASTRA MASTERS OF THE OTHER SECTS REJECT THIS ONE SECT AND DO NOT ACCEPT IT, DENOUNCING IT AS AN OUTSIDE WAY ADHERING TO THE BUDDHADHARMA. THAT IS BECAUSE ALTHOUGH WHAT THE EXTERNALISTS RECKON IS NOT THE SAME, BOTH OF THEM ESTABLISH AS SELF.

COMMENTARY:

THE FIRST School belongs to the Small Vehicle, not the Great Vehicle. Since it has both self and dharmas, neither being empty, the two attachments remain: attachment to self and attachment to dharmas. Because both exist, it IS called THE SCHOOL OF THE EXISTENCE OF BOTH SELF AND DHARMAS. THAT IS exemplified by THE VATSIPUTRIYA SECT which amounts to an outside way. Externalists are always trying to make the physical body into a body as indestructible as vajra, considering the body to be so fine that we ought to keep it forever. The situation is similar to the search for immortality on the part of Taoists and Brahmins. They were always looking for some means to prevent the body from going bad. The methods they used were very secret, and were like what Hwei Ming had in mind when he asked the Sixth Patriarch:

Superior One, apart from what you have just said, is there some other, further secret?"

In this case, the Vatsiputriyans cultivated their secret method for a very long time without result, and began to wonder if it had any use. And so they took refuge with the Buddha.

Even so, they did not abandon their attachments or their view of a self. They couldn't empty their attachment to a self and to dharmas, so they established a school of their being a conditioned, an unconditioned, and a "neither" -- "neither" meaning neither conditioned nor unconditioned.

"Vatsiputriya" means "Calf-son," probably because when young they were very disobedient and intractable. If someone told them which way was South, they insisted it was North. If people told them which way was East, they maintained it was West. They were like bulls that always want to butt and gore people with their horns. People ended up saying, "Those offspring of cows!"— maybe. We'll explain it that way for now, because there's no definite proof one way or another. "AND SO FORTH" indicates the one name Vatsiputriya stands for four more Sects as well, there being five in all.

The Five Sects of the Vatsiputriya Line

1. The Vatsiputriya -- "Calf-son" Sect (犢子部) .
2. The Dharmottariya -- "Dharma Highest" sect (法上部).
3. The Bhadraniya -- "Descendants of the Worthies" Sect (賢冑部).
4. The Sammatiya -- "Proper Measure" Sect (正量部) .
5. The Channagirika -- "Secret Forest" Sect (密林山部), whose adherents cultivated in a very secret mountain forest.

IT ESTABLISHES THREE ASSEMBLAGES, that is, three kinds of dharmas, THE FIRST BEING THAT OF THE CONDITIONED, conditioned dharmas, and THE SECOND THAT OF THE UNCONDITIONED, unconditioned dharmas. That's why it's called the School of the Existence of Both Self and Dharmas, for not only were conditioned dharmas not empty, unconditioned dharmas were even less empty. AND THE THIRD is THE ASSEMBLAGE OF NEITHER, neither conditioned nor unconditioned -- "NEITHER" just BEING THE SELF. IT ALSO ESTABLISHES FIVE STORES OF DHARMAS. THREE OF THOSE ARE THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME, past time, present time, and future time. THE FOURTH Store IS THE UNCONDITIONED, unconditioned dharmas, AND THE FIFTH IS THE STORE OF THE INEFFABLE, dharmas that cannot be expressed in words and about which nothing can be said, IN WHICH THE SELF RESIDES. Their meaning is that, in addition to the rest, there is a self, for if there were no self, how could there be an ineffable? SINCE for them the self is THE INEFFABLE, they could say it IS BOTH CONDITIONED AND UNCONDITIONED.

FURTHERMORE, ALL THE SHASTRA MASTERS OF THE OTHER SECTS REJECT THIS ONE SECT, The Vatsiputriya Sect and its derivatives, AND SO DO NOT ACCEPT IT. They don't recognize it, DENOUNCING IT by naming it AS AN OUTSIDE WAY ADHERING TO THE BUDDHADHARMA. The Vatsiputriyans do study the Buddhadharma, but they have not yet put down their outside way. THAT designation of them as externalists IS made BECAUSE ALTHOUGH WHAT THE EXTERNALISTS RECKON IS NOT THE SAME, BOTH OF THEM ESTABLISH A

SELF, just as it does. Neither group is free of a self. They all wonder, "What about me? What's in it for me? What can I cultivate to become? What can I do?" There's always a "me." The view of self is never empty, and so they have an attachment to a self. Nor can they put down their externalist dharmas, and so their attachment to dharmas is not empty either. Therefore, in the Buddha's time, they were labeled as those of an outside way.

PROLOGUE:

THE SECOND IS THE SCHOOL OF THE EXISTENCE OF DHARMAS AND NON-EXISTENCE OF A SELF, THAT IS, THE SARVASTIVADINS AND SO FORTH. ALL THE DHARMAS THEY ESTABLISH ARE NOT APART FROM FORM AND MIND. OR ELSE THEY ESTABLISH THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME AND THE UNCONDITIONED, OR THEY MAKE A DIVISION INTO FIVE CATEGORIES, IN NONE OF WHICH IS THERE A SELF. SINCE THEIR SCHOOL HAS NO SELF, IT DIFFERS FROM THE RECKONINGS OF EXTERNALISTS.

COMMENTARY:

There's nothing fixed about these dharmas. They were just established in a muddled fashion. Such doctrines were advanced, but fundamentally there's nothing fixed about it. If you consider them to be fixed, then you are seeing these dharmas as too real. THE SECOND, which its adherents also established on their own, IS an indication of progress over the previous School which held that both dharmas and the self exist. THE SCHOOL in question here is that OF THE EXISTENCE OF DHARMAS AND NON-EXISTENCE OF A SELF. This School says that dharmas exist, and so it still entails an attachment to dharmas. But it says there is no self, so the attachment to self is emptied. Therefore it is called the School of the Existence of Dharmas and Non-existence of a Self. THAT is the School started by those adherents of the Small Vehicle called THE SARVASTIVADINS, AND SO FORTH—the Sects similar to them. ALL THE DHARMAS THEY ESTABLISH ARE NOT APART FROM FORM dharmas AND MIND dharmas. They say there aren't any dharmas which are not form dharmas or mind dharmas. OR ELSE THEY ESTABLISH THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME, past, present, and future, AND THE UNCONDITIONED—unconditioned dharmas.

OR, simply on their own, THEY MAKE A DIVISION INTO FIVE CATEGORIES.

The Five Categories of Dharmas According to the Sarvastivadin School.

1. Form Dharmas (rūpa) .
2. Mind Dharmas (citta).
3. Dharmas Belonging to the Mind (caitta).
4. Non-Interactive Dharmas (citta-viprayukta-samskāra)
5. Unconditioned Dharmas (asamskrta)

They could have established six or seven categories if they had wanted to, but they ordinarily set up the five just listed, IN NONE OF WHICH IS THERE A SELF.

Attachment to self is broken, and the self has no part in their system. SINCE THEIR SCHOOL HAS NO SELF, IT DIFFERS FROM THE RECKONINGS OF EXTERNALISTS. Their way of thinking was not the same as that of those of outside ways who theorize, "Oh, I think it's this way; or it may be that way."

PROLOGUE:

FURTHERMORE, WITHIN THE CONDITIONED THEY ESTABLISH PROPER CAUSES AND CONDITIONS, IN ORDER TO REFUTE THE EXTERNALISTS' DEVIANT CAUSATION AND NON-EXISTENCE OF CAUSATION.

COMMENTARY:

FURTHERMORE, WITHIN THE CONDITIONED dharmas THEY ESTABLISH PROPER CAUSES AND CONDITIONS—a proper doctrine of causation. The reason they do so is IN ORDER TO REFUTE THE EXTERNALISTS' DEVIANT CAUSATION AND NON-EXISTENCE OF CAUSATION.

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