

Handout Buddha nature (Klaus-Dieter Mathes, 29.05.2021)

*Anūnatvāpūrṇatvanirdeśa*: Buddha nature = ultimate truth = *dharmakāya*

*Śrīmālādevīsūtra* in the Kanjur: Buddha nature = *dharmakāya* when free from stains

*Mahāparinirvāṇamahāsūtra*, *Śrīmālādevīsūtra*:

The *dharmakāya* is permanent, blissful, the *ātman*, pure

*Laṅkāvatārasūtra*: emptiness = buddha nature = *ālayavijñāna*

Emptiness no. 6: “great emptiness of ultimate meaning”

*Mahāyānasamgraha*: seeds of studying, reflecting and meditating are not stored in the *ālayavijñāna*, but the enlighthenment of the buddhas

*Ratnagotravibhāga* (RGV) 1.27: Three reasons for buddha nature:

1. Buddha wisdom is present in all sentient beings
2. Nonduality of stainlessness
3. Its fruit (buddhahood) has been metaphorically applied (*upacāra*) to the potential (buddha nature is the cause);

Or: Its fruit is a manner of speech (*upacāra*) for the potential (“the potential is vaguely called a buddha, even though the buddha nature with its inseparable qualities is not yet purifies”)

RGV 1.52: Just as all-pervading space is not defiled because of its subtle nature,

So is this [buddha nature], which is found everywhere in sentient beings. I.52

*Bhagavatgīta* 13.32: Just as all-pervading space is not defiled because of its subtle nature,

So is this *ātman*, which is found everywhere in sentient beings.

(*tathātmā* instead of *tathāyam*)

RGV 1.154-155: There is nothing to be removed from it and nothing to be added.

The real should be seen as real, and seeing the real, one becomes liberated.

Buddha nature is empty of adventitious [stains], which have the defining characteristic of being separable;

But it is not empty of unsurpassable qualities, which have the defining characteristic of not being separable.

RGV 1.156-157:

Why did the Buddhas teach here that a Buddha-element exists in all sentient beings,

After they taught everywhere that everything should be known to be empty in every respect, like clouds, [visions in a] dream and illusions.

One may have the five faults of being discouraged...

Madhyamaka hermeneutics (Dharmamitra): the teaching of buddha nature is *neyārtha*

Motive: removal of five faults

Intentional ground: emptiness

Statement of contradiction if taken literally: buddha nature contradicts Prajñāpāramitā

Yogācāra hermeneutics (Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*)

Motive: removal of five faults (is not a criterion for being *neyārtha*)

Concise meaning: seven vajra points

Meaning of words: refers to vajra words, because there meaning is difficult to realize

Connection: RGV 1.1. From the Buddha comes the Dharma...

Objections and their rebuttal: Prajñāpāramitā is *neyārtha*