Acharyas of the First Buddhist Council

In fact, Buddha’s teachings were first written down only in the early first century BCE, and those were from the Theravada School. They were written in Sri Lanka in the Pali language. In the centuries before this, the monks preserved Buddha’s teachings by memorizing and periodically reciting them.

The custom of reciting Buddha’s teachings from memory began a few months after Buddha passed away. This occurred at the First Buddhist Council, held in Rajagrha (rGyal-Po’i khab, present-day Rajgir), with five hundred disciples attending. The traditional accounts record that all the participants were arhats (dgra-bcom-pa), liberated beings.

According to the Vaibhashika version, three of the arhats recited the teachings from memory. If all the other members of the assembly agreed that what these arhats recited was exactly what Buddha had actually said, this would confirm the accuracy of the teachings. Ananda (Kun-dga’-bo) recited the sutras (mdo)-thedicourses concerning various themes of practice.

Upali (Nye-bar ‘khor) recited the vinaya-the monastic rules of discipline. Mahakashyapa (‘Od-bsrung chen-po) recited the abhidharma (chos mngon-pa), concerning special topics of knowledge. These three divisions of Buddha’s teachings formed The Three Basket-like Collections (sDe-snod gsum, Skt. Tripitaka, Three Baskets). The Vinaya Basket contained the teachings on higher ethical self-discipline, The Sutra Basket, those on higher absorbed concentration, The Abhidharma Basket, the teachings on higher discriminating awareness or higher “wisdom”. The Vaibhashika account includes the point that not all of Buddha’s abhidharma teachings were recited at this First Council. Some were transmitted orally outside the jurisdiction of the council and were added later.
According to the Sautrantika version, the abhidharma teachings recited at the council were not the words of Buddha at all. The seven abhidharma texts included in this Basket were actually composed by seven of the arhats.

**Acharyas of the Second Buddhist Council**

The Second Buddhist Council took place, with an assembly of seven hundred monks, at Vaishali. The purpose of the council was to settle ten issues concerning monastic discipline. The main decision agreed upon was that monks were not allowed to accept gold. In present-day terms, this means that monks are not allowed to handle money. The council then recited The Vinaya Basket to reconfirm its purity.

According to the Theravada account, the first split in the monastic community occurred at this council. The offering monks left to form the Mahasanghika (dGe-'dun phal-chen-po) School, while the elders who remained became known as the Theravada School. “Theravada” means, in Pali, “followers of the elders’ words.” “Mahasanghika” means “the majority community.”

According to other accounts, the actual split came later, in 349 BCE. The point of contention was not over issues of monastic discipline, but rather over philosophical views. The disagreement concerned whether or not an arhat—a liberated being—is limited. The Theravada elders conceded that arhats are limited in their knowledge. For instance, they might not know direction when traveling and could receive information on such things from others. Nevertheless, they knew everything about Dharmamatters. Arhats could even have doubts about their own attainments, although they would not relapse. Theravada insisted, however, that arhats are completely free of disturbing emotions, such as desire.

The Mahasanghika or “Majority group” disagreed concerning disturbing emotions. They asserted that arhats could still be seduced in dreams and have nocturnal emission,
because arhats still had a trace of lust. Thus, Mahasanghika made a clear distinction between an arhat and a Buddha.

Followers of the Theravada school gravitated to the western part of North India. The Mahasanghika followers gravitated to the eastern part of North India and then spread to Andhra, in the eastern part of South India. It was there, in Andhra, that Mahayana later emerged. Western scholars view Mahasanghika as a forerunner of Mahayana.

**Acharyas of the Third Buddhist Council**

In 322 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya founded the Maurya Empire in the central region of North India that had been known as Magadha, the homeland of Buddhism. The Empire quickly grew, reaching its fullest extent under the rule of Emperor Ashoka (Mya-nganmed-pa), 268-232 BCE. During his times, the Maurya Empire stretched from present day eastern Afghanistan to Assam, and covered most of South India.

During Emperor Ashoka’s reign, in 237 BCE, the Sarvastivada School also broke away from Theravada, over certain philosophical issues. The Theravada School gives, as the occasion for this break, the Third Council, held under imperial patronage at the Maurya capital, Pataliputra-present-day Patna. However, they date this council as having taken place in 257 BCE, twenty years earlier than the Sarvastivada record of the split. This is because, according to Theravada, it was only after this council reaffirmed the purity of the Theravada view that Emperor Ashoka sent out missions, the next year, to introduce Buddhism to new regions, both in his empire and beyond. Through these missions, Theravada Buddhism was introduced to present-day Pakistan (Gandhara and Sindh), present-day southeastern Afghanistan (Bactria), Gujarat, the western part of South India, Sri Lanka, and Burma. After Emperor Ashoka’s death, his son Jaloka introduced Sarvastivada to Kashmir. From there, it eventually spread to present-day Afghanistan.
Regardless of when the council took place, its main work, then, was to analyze Buddha’s teachings and refute what the orthodox Theravada elders considered as incorrect views. The head monk of the council, Moggaliputta Tissa, compiled these analytical regulations as Grounds of Disputation (Pali Kathavatthu), which became the fifth of the seven texts in the Theravada Abhidhamma Basket.

Other Hinayana traditions do not record this council in the same manner as Theravada does. In any case, one of the main philosophical points over which the split took place was the existence of past, present and future phenomena.

Sarvastivada asserted that everything exists-no-longer-happening things, presently happening things, and not-yet-happening things. This is because the atoms that things are made of are eternal; only the forms they take change. Thus, the forms that the atoms take can transform from not-yet-happening things into presently-happening things and then into no-longer-happening things. But the atoms that constitute each of these things are the same eternal atoms.

Not only Theravada, but also Mahasanghika asserted that only presently-happening things exist, as well as those no-longer-happening things that have not yet produced their results. The latter exist because they can still perform a function. Sarvastivada agreed with Mahasanghika, however, that arhats have limitations in the form of traces of disturbing emotions.

In 190 BCE, the Dharmagupta School also split from Theravada. Dharmagupta agreed with Theravada that arhats do not have disturbing emotions. Like Mahasanghika, however, Dharmagupta tended to elevate Buddha. It asserted that it is more important to make offerings to Buddhas, than to monastics, and it especially emphasized making offerings to stupas-monuments containing the relics of Buddhas.

Dharmagupta added a fourth basket-like collection, The Dharani Basket. “Dharanis” (gzungs), meaning “retention power” in Sanskrit and “Vital measures” in Tibetan translation,
are devotional Sanskrit formulas that, when chanted, help the practitioner to retain the words and meaning of the Dharma, so as to uphold constructive phenomena and eliminate destructive ones. This development of Dharanis paralleled the devotional spirit of times, marked by the emergence of the Hindu classic, Bhagavad Gita.

The Dharmagupta School spread to present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Central Asia, and on to China. The Chinese adopted the Dharmagupta version of the monks’ and nuns’ vows. Over the centuries, this version of the monastic rules of discipline was transmitted to Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

**Acharyas of the Fourth Buddhist Council**

The Theravada and Sarvastivada Schools each held their own fourth councils. The Theravada School held its fourth council in 83 BCE in Sri Lanka. In the face of various groups having splintered off from Theravada over differences in interpretation of Buddha words, Maharakkhita and five hundred Theravada elders met to recite and write down Buddha’s words in order to preserve their authenticity. This was the first time Buddha’s teachings were put into written form and, in this case, they were rendered into the Pali language. This version of The Three Basket-Like Collections, The Tipitaka, is commonly known as The Pali Canon. The other Hinayana Schools, however, continued to transmit the teachings in oral form.

Within the Sarvastivada School, various differences of interpretation of the teachings gradually arose. The first to appear was the Vaibhashika School. Then, around 50 CE, Sautrantika developed. Each had its own assertions concerning many points of Abhidharma.

Meanwhile, the political situation in northern India, Kashmir, and Afghanistan was about to undergo a major change, with the yuezhi (Wade-Giles: Yueh-chih) invasion from Central Asia. The Yuezhi were an Indo-European people living originally in East Turkistan. Conquering a vast area to the west and then south at the end of the second century BCE, they
eventually established the Kushan Dynasty, which lasted until 226 CE. At its height, the Kushan Empire extended from modern-day Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, through Kashmir and northwest India, to central North India and Central India. Linking the Silk Route with the seal ports at the mouth of the Indus River, this dynasty brought Buddhism into contact with many foreign influences. Likewise through this contact, Buddhism came into China.

The most famous of the Kushan rulers was king Kanishka, who ruled, according to some sources, from 78 to 102 CE and, from other sources, from 127 to 147 CE. In either case, the Sarvastivada School held its fourth council during his reign, either in his capital city of Purushapura (modern-day Peshawar) or in Srinagar, Kashmir. The council rejected the Sautrantaka abhidharma and codified its own abhidharma in The Great Commentary (Skt. Mahavibhasha). The council also oversaw the translation, from Prakrit into Sanskrit, of the Sravastivada version of the Three Basket-like Collections and the writing down of these Sanskrit texts.

Between the fourth and fifth centuries CE, the Mulasarvastivada School branched off from mainstream Vaibhashika Sarvastivada in Kashmir. In the late eighth century CE, the Tibetans adopted its version of the monastic rules of discipline. In later centuries, it spread from Tibet to Mongolia and to the Mongol and some of the Turkic regions of Russia.

**Division of Sects and Acharyas:**

Vinitadeva and the author of the Bhiksuvarsagrapccha divided the eighteen sects into five groups, thus:

I & II. Manasanghikas comprising Purvasaila, Aparasaila, Haimavata, Lokottaravada and Prajnapativada.
III. Sarvastivadins comprising Mulasarvastivada, Kasyapira, mahisasaka, Dharmagupta, Bahusrutiya, Tamrasatiya and a section of the Vibhajyavada.

IV. Sammitiyas comprising Kaurukullaka, Avantaka and Vatsiputriya.

Sathaviras comprising Jetavaniya, Abhayagirivasin, and Mahaviharavasin.

Vinitadeva’s information and classification evidently point to a posterior date. He includes some of the later schools in his enumeration and omits some of the older schools, which were probably extinct by his time, e.g., the Ekavyavaharika, Gokulika, Dharmottariya, and Bhadrayanika. Particularly noticeable is his inclusion of the Ceylonese sects like Jetavaniya (i.e. Sagalika of the Mahayamsa, v. 13) Abhayagirivasin (i.e. Dhammarucika of the Mahavamsa, v. 13) and the Mahaviharavasin. The Jetavaniya, it will be noted, come into existence as late as the reign of Mahasena (5th Century A.D)

Taranatha in his 42nd chapter (Kurze Betrachtung des Sinnes der vier Schulen) furnishes us with very important identifications of the different names of schools appearing in the lists of Bhavya, Vasumitra, Vinitadeva and others. After reproducing the several lists, he gives the following identifications:-

Kasyapiya = Suvarsaka; Samkrantivadin= Uttariya= Tamrasatiya; Caityaka= Purvasaila= Schools of Mahadeva; Lokottaravada= Kaukkutika; Ekavyavaharika is a general name of the Mahasanghikas; Kaurukullaka, Vatsiputriya, Dharmottariya, Bhadrayaniya and Chhannagarika held almost similar views.

These identifications help us to trace the Uttarapathakas of the Kathavatthu. This school should be identified with the Uttariyas of Bhavya and the Samkrantivadins of Vasumitra or Samkrantikas of the Pali texts. The Samkrantivadins were also known as the Tamrasatiyas probably on account of their copper-coloured robes. Out of these Tamrasatiyas or Uttarapathakas or Samkrantivadins or Darstantikas arose the Sautrantikas, who are often mentioned in the Samkarabhasya, Sarvadarsanasangraha and similar other works of the Brahmanic schools of philosophy.
A comparison of the different lists of schools shows that their groupings quite agree with one another. The Mahasanghika branches may be sub-divided into two groups. The earlier (or the first) group comprised the original Mahasanghikas, Ekavyavaharikas and Caityakas or Lokottaravadins. According to Taranatha, Ekavyavaharikas and the Mahasanghikas were almost identical. The chief centre of this group was at Pataliputra. The later (or the second) group of schools came into existence long after the Mahasanghikas. They became widely known as the Saila schools or the Andhakas, and made their chief centre at Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda. With them may be classed the Bahusrutiya and Prajnaptivadins, as in doctrinal matters the former agreed more with the Saila schools than with the Mahasanghikas, while the latter had its origin as a protest against the doctrines of the Bahusrutiyas.

The third group of schools is formed by the earlier Mahisasakas, and Sarvastivadins with the later Mahisasakas, Dharmaguptakas, Kasyapiyas, Samkrantikas or Uttarapathakas, or Tamrasatiyas.

The fourth group comprised the Vajjiputtakas or Vatsiputriyas with Dharmottariyas, Bhadrayanikas, Channagarikas, and Sammitiyas, and also Kaurukullakas. In this group, practically all the schools merged in one, viz., the Vatisiputriyas, otherwise known as the Sammitiyas.

The last, the fifth group but the earliest in origin, was the Theravada which, as Vinitadeva says, formed a group with the Ceylonese sects, viz., Jetavaniya, Abhayagirivasins and Mahaviharavasins.

Prof. Lamotte in his Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien (p. 578) has furnished us with a tabular statement of the geographical distribution of the several schools on the basis of inscriptions discovered so far. According to this statement, the schools, divided into several groups in our scheme, are reproduced here.
**Acharys for the Development of Buddhism**

Fa-hien, the Chinese traveler, gives an account of the construction of the Kanishka-stupa at Peshawar. Sung-yun, another Chinese traveler, who visited India in 518 CE, reports on the construction of Kanishka’s stupa. The well-known Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang made an extensive tour in India in 630 CE and he also mentions in his account about the Kaniska-stupa...in Kanishka’s vihara, in Mahasena’s Sangharama, in the acceptance of the Sarvastivada teacher”.

In the Buddhist ecclesiastical history Kaniska’s name is closely associated with the Fourth Buddhist Council that was convoked and organized on the model of the Council of Pataliputra summoned by Asoka. After his conversion to Buddhism, Kanishka became a devout Buddhist and everyday he received from a Buddhist monk instructions and advice in sacred texts which he used to study with great devotion. But the varying opinions and the conflicting doctrine of the different sects in religious matters made his unhappy. His idea was to reconcile the various opinions of these sects and to settle the Vinaya, Sutra and Abhidhamma texts.

Northern Buddhism, however, tells us a different story. It states that Balapandita or Samudra first converted Asoka to Buddhism and afterwards, Upagupta, a Buddhist monk, influenced his life. The Divyavadana mentions that when Asoka became an ordinary upasaka, he announced that he had taken refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma. “Saranam-risin upaimi tam cha Buddham gunavaram aryaniveditam cha dhammam”. He even declared that he was ready to give up everything ...Children, home, wives and wealth for the kingdom of righteousness “dharmarajyasya sasane”. Under the guidance of the venerable Upagupta Asoka visited Buddhist sacred places. It is said in the Asokavadana that when Asoka, under the guidance of Upagupta, undertook his pilgrimage to the sacred places, he paid his visit to the stupas of the Buddha’s disciples, Sariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, Vakkula and Ananda. He gave hundred thousand suvarnas (gold pieces) in
honor of each of the first three stupas. He also made a gift at the stupa of Vakkula. But he spent about ten million suvarnas for the stupa of Ananda.

Several Chinese Buddhist pilgrims visited India for several centuries and they had left contemporary accounts of the Indian scene. Fa-hien, who came to India in 399 CE wrote in his book an account of the government and social condition of the Gangetic provinces in the time of Chandragupta II, Vikramaditya.

Sung-yun, who visited India in 518 CE, gives an account of Kanishka’s stupa. His account is helpful for a study of Buddhism in Kanishka’s reign. Hiuen Tsang travelled in India in the seventh century CE His work contains valuable information on social, political and religious conditions of India.

I-tsing visited India in the seventh century CE. His account is also of immense value for a study of religious and social history of India. He travelled extensively in India and other countries and returned to China in 695 CE. The last notable Chinese pilgrim was Du K’ong, who arrived in Ki-pin in 759 CE through the Kabul Valley and Gandhara. He was in Kashmir for four years. In his account he described several Buddhist establishments, monasteries and Viharas in the Kingdom of Kashmir.

The well-known History of Buddhism by the Tibetan Historian Lama Taranatha, who flourished in the sixteenth century, gives us important information pertaining to the propogation of Buddhism in India and abroad and his work is also indispensable to us from historical view point.
Acharya Nagarjuna

Nagarjuna was a disciple of Rahulabhadra. He preached extensively the Madhyamika school of thought. He rendered a great service to the Sravakas by turning out many Sravaka bhikshus for transgressing the disciplinary rules. At that time appeared Bhadantas Nanda, Paramasena, Samyaksatya, who preached Alaya-Vijnana, i.e. the Yogachara school of thought. Asanga and his brother Vasubandu were counted as later Yogacharins.

About this time king Munja of Odivisa with the large following obtained Kayasiddhi. In the west, Malaya, king Bhgojadeva also obtained. Kayasiddhi, and the Aryas acquired the Dharanis. Temples were erected in Patavesa (pukam), Odivisa, Bengal Radha, Magadha and Nalanda.

Nagarjuna in his later life went to the south. He composed the Panchavidya-samgraha to establish that matter had no existence as held by the Sarvastiyadina.

In the south in the country of Dravida there were two Brahmanas Madhu and Supramadhu, who possessed incalculable wealth. They vied with Nagarjuna with the three Vedas and the eighteen sciences. The Brahmins questioned why Nagarjuna, who was so learned in the Vedas, should become a Sakya Sramana. But when they heard the praise of Buddha, they became faithful to Mahayana Buddhism. Both of them maintained 250 monks. The first had the Satasahasrika copied and gave the copies to the monks while the second supplied them with all the requisites. According to another tradition, Nagarjuna resided in Sriparvata and obtained the first Bodhisattva stage.

A friend of Nagarjuna was Vararuchi, who was the purohita of King Udayana. A young wife of the king knew Sanskrit grammar and said to him while swimming in water

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“modakam ma sincha” (do not splash me with water). The king gave her a cake boiled in sesame oil as he understood it in the language of the south. Realising his ignorance of Sanskrit grammar, he began to learn Sanskrit from Vararuchi.

Vararuchi was a devoted follower of Buddha. He became acquainted with Nagarjuna when he was the Pandita of Nalanda. He hailed from the country of Radha, east of Magadha. He recited the Avalokitesvara mantra for 12 years.

Kalidasa lived about this time. He came to the south to King Udayana, who wanted to learn Sanskrit from him. He invited Nagarajasena, who had mastered Panini. The king wanted to study Indrakarana from Sanmukhakumara, who uttered “Siddho varnasamamnaya” (Kalapa I) and at once he comprehended the meaning of all words.

**Acharya Aryadeva**

At that time lived King Salachandra’s son Chandragupta, who was a powerful king and performed both kusala and akusala deeds. He did not take refuge in the Three Ratnas. At that time appeared Aryadeva, a disciple of Nagarjuna, the then head of the monastery of Nalanda. Aryadeva was well-known to the Tibetans. He was born in a miraculous way in the pleasur-garden of the king of Simhaladvipa. Chandrakirti, the commentator of Nagarjuna’s Madhyamika-Karika states that Aryadeva hailed from Simhaladvipa. He was ordained by Hemadeva. After studying the Tripitaka, he came to Jambudviya to see the Buddhist temples and Chaityas. Aryadeva met Nagarjuna at Sriparvata but this Nagarjuna propagated the Tantric doctrines. There were two Nagarjunas: the earlier one was the propounder of the Madhyamika School of philosophy and the later was an alchemist, a Tantric master.²

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² Ibid.
Achrya Asanga and his brother

When Karmachandra was in power, Gambhirapaksha, the son of Buddhapaksha ruled over Panchala for 40 years. In Kashmir lived a Turushka’s son called Mahasammata, who had visualized the face of Krodhamrita. He united Kashmir, Tukhara and Ghazni. He worshipped the triratna and erected a Chaitya, containing the Buddha’s tooth-relic, at Ghazni. He invited several monks and nuns, male and female lay-devotees for workshipping the Chaitya. At that time Bhikshu Jivakara and many others tried to comprehend the inner meaning of the Prajna-paramita.

After the death of king Gambhirapaksha, his son Vrikschachandra succeeded him, but he was not a powerful ruler and so Jaleraha, king of Odivisa wielded power over all the eastern countries.

Arya Asanga

At this time lived Acharya Asanga, Vasubandhu, Buddhadas, Samghadasa, Nagamitra and his disciple Sangharakshita. Soon after them appeared many Mahayana followers, practicing Anuttarayogatantra, which spread widely, and many attained Vidyadhara stage. Guhyamati and other preached the mantrayana, maintaining secrecy. The secret mantras were handed down from teacher to disciples, i.e. from Sri Saraha to Tantric Nagarjuna. They wrote commentaries on the Anuttarya-yoga-sastra. During the reign of King Devapala and his son, kriya and charya tantras became popular. At that time lived Acharyas Paramasva, Lui-pa and Charpavipa in the region around Varanasi.

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3 Ibid: 76-79.
The biography of Asanga and his brother is as follows:-

At the time of King Buddhapaksha was born Prakasasila, whose son was Asanga, who became very proficient in the art of writing, calculation, grammar, dialectics etc. He mastered the Tripitaka and the Prajnaparamita sastras. At a later date Asanga composed the Mayajalatantra and maitreya-sadhana, Bodhisattva Maitreya, being pleased with him, took him to Tushita heaven, where he imparted to him the Ya gacharyabumisastra in five sections. He built a vihara within a forest in Magadha and composed there Abhidharmasamuchchaya, Mahayana-samgraha, Abhisamayalankara etc.

King Gambhirapaksha’s son invited several monks to Ushmapura vihara and maintained them. Asanga taught here the Tripitaka of the Sravakas and about 500 Mahayana sutras. Asanga, as a Bodhisattva, cutoff some flesh from the cals of his leg, to feed the worms, which were sucking the blook of a diseased dog in order that both the worms and the dog might not die. Maitreya appeared before him at that time, radiating light on all sides. Though Mahayana Buddhism flourished, there were some persecutions. The king asked Asanga a few questions relating to the true meaning of Sunyata. In his later life, he lived in Nalanda. Finally his life ended in Rajagriha.

Vasubandhu

Vasubandhu, younger brother of Asanga, became a bhikshu and studied the Sravaka including the Abhidharma. He became acquainted with the doctrines of the eighteen schools. He went to Kashmir and became a disciple of Samghabhadra. He obtained vast erudition by studying the Vibhashas. He studied also the difference in the Sutra and Vinaya of the different schools. At the same time he studied the work of the heretical teachers and all kinds of dialectics. He came back to Magadha recited the Sravara-pitaka. After studyng

\footnote{Ibid.}
the Yogacharyabhumi-sastra, he felt sad that Asanga, inspite of 12 years of practice of Samadhi, could not attain perfection. Asanga felt that Vasubandhu’s conversion to Mahayananism was near, and so he asked a bhikshu to study the Akshayamati-nirdesa-sutra and advised them to recite the two Sutras before Vasubandhu. Listening to these texts, Vasubandhu realized the fundamentals of Mahayana. He regretted that he had committed a great sin by reviling Mahayanis and wanted to cut off his tongue. At that time, the two bhikshus dissuaded him from doing so, saying that your brother Asanga had the power to give you atonement for the sin and therefore you should go to the Acharya and ask him for atonement. Asanga asked him to study the Mahayana texts and write commentaries on the same and thereby make amends for the sin and he recited to him the Ushnisha-vijaya-vidya. When Vasubandhu understood all the texts and the Dharanis, he practiced Samadhi, according to the direction in the texts. Vasubandhu studied the Pitakas of the Sravakas as well as the Ratnakuta-sutras, Avatamsakasutras, Astasahasrika and Satasahasrika Prajnaparamita and other Mahayana treatises. He wrote commentaries on the Pachavimsat-sahasrika Prajnaparamita, Akshayarnatinirdesa, Ratnanusmriti, Panchamudrasutra, Pratityasamutpada, two Vibhangas and other Hinayana and Mahayana texts. He composed the eight Prakarana sections. He established several centres of learning in the south. Vasubandhu at last went to Nepal, composed the Abhidharmakosa and sent it to Sanghabhadra for his opinion.

Acharya Dignaga and others

After the death of King Gambhirapakasha in the west in Maru land Sri Harsha came into power and ruled over all the western countries. This happened during the life-time of Vasubandhu. In course of time the King Den eloped faith in Buddhism and made Acharya Gunaprabha his spiritual preceptor. Acharya Gunaprabha came of a Brahmana family, mastered the Vedas and other Brahmanic sastras. He learnt from Vasubandhu the Sarvaka-
pitaka and gained knowledge of many Mahayana sutras. He became a master of the Vinaya Pitaka. While he was in Mathura he himself expiated for any monk falling to observe the disciplinary rules. At this time, the Chandras were ruling in the eastern countries. They believed both in Jainism and Buddhism. Sthiramati and Dignaga were preaching the dharma for the salvation of the beings in the east. Sthiramati was born in Dandakaranya, obtained the blessings of the goddess Tara. He studied both Hinayana and Mahayana Abhidharma and the Ratnakuta sutras, on which he wrote a commentary. He wrote also commentaries on Madhyamak-nula and Abhidharmakoshabhashya. He defeated the heretical teachers in dialectics. Buddhadas, a disciple of Asanga with Gunaprabha was preaching the religion in the west while Bhadanta Samghadasa assisted by Buddhadasa propagated the religion in Kashmir, and Buddhapalita in the south. Samghadasa came of a Brahmin family of the south. He became a disciple of Vasubandhu and a followed of the sarvastivada school. He established 24 centres of learning for Vinaya and Abhidharma studies in Bodh-Gaya. He was invited by Mahasammata, the Turughka king, to Kashmir. He built there the Ratnuaguptavihara and the Kumbhakundavihara, and propogated the teaching of Buddha much more than Asanga and his brother. He wrote a commentary on the Yogacharyabhu

At this time appeared Bhavya and Vinitasena. At the advice of Luipa, the king of Odivisa, Jalasimha gave up the rulership. The Tantric Siddharcharya Darika became the king of Odivisa and Tengi his minister. A contemporary of Bhavya was Triratnadasa. Acharya Triratnadasa learnt the Abhidharma from Vasubandhu and later from Dignaga.

Acharya Dignaga was born in a Brahmin family in the south at Simhavaktra near Kanchi. He joined the Vatsiputriya school. He mastered the Sravaka-Pitaka as well as the Mahayana texts and Dharanis. He resided at Bhorasaila in Odivisa. In the Pramanasamuchchaya of Dharmakirti appear the words “Bowing before him, who is logic

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5 Ibid.
personified and who wishes welfare for all beings, fragments of his different works are collected here”. Dignaga converted to Buddhism Bhadrapalita, minister of the King of Odivisa.

Acharya Buddhapalita was born in the south at Hamsakrida. He became very learned. He learnt the teachings of Nagarjuna from Sangharakshita. He visualized Manjusri. In the south at Dantapura he wrote commentaries of many Sastras of Nagarjuna and Aryadeva.

Acharya Bhavya was born in a Kshatriya family of the south. He studied the Tripitaka but he preferred to study Mahayana texts and Nagarjunopadesa with Acharya Sangharakshita. He, however, criticised the commentary written on Nagarjunapadesa. Both of these Acharya considered Yogachara as a separate system. Buddhapalita was the earlier and Bhavya a later disciple of Nagarjuna. Chandrakirti was a disciple of Aryadeva.

Acharya Vimuktasena was a nephew of Buddhapalita. He joined the Kurukulla school, but he turned later to Mahayana, came to Vasubandu and studied with him the Prajnaparamita. Then he became the disciple of Dsnnharakshita. He went to Varanasi and procured a copy of the Panchavimsatisahasrika Prajnaparamita in eight sections, which was in harmony with Abisamayalankarakarika.

Acharya Dharmakirti.

Venerable Dharmakirti was born in the south at Trim. Alaya, in a Brahmin family. In his childhood he was of very sharp intellect, he was skilful in the art of sculpture, in Vedas and Vedangas, in medical science, grammar and in all non-Buddhist doctrines. When about 16 or 18 years old, he became well-versed in the philosophical works of the non-Buddhists. At one time, when he had became famous, he came across the Buddhapravachanas. He then realised that these were much superior to their own sastras, and so he became an Upasaka. He came to Madhyadesa and was ordained as a bhikshu by Acharya Dharmapala and acquired
knowledge of the Pitakas and studied many dialectical treatises but his mind was not satisfied. He then studied Pramanasamuchchaya with Isvarasena, disciple of Dignaga. He then received consecration from a Vajracharya and devoted himself to the mantras and invoked Adhideva. Herukahimself appeared before him and enquired about his intention. He said that he might attain victory in all directions. Heruka replied “Ha Ha Hum” and disappeared then and there. He then composed the Stava-dandaka (in Tanjur Srivra-daka-stava-dandaka, also in Abhidhanottara).

He wanted to learn the secret doctrine of the non-Buddhist system, and so he put on the dress of a household-servant, came to the south and went to Kumarila. As his service pleased Kumarila and his wife and on their inquiry what he desired, he said that he would like to learn the system taught by him to his disciples. His wish was fulfilled by Kumarila and he was liberally rewarded by his master and his wife for his faithful and indefatigable service.

The followers of the system of Kanada met together and contested with Dharmakirti and conversed to Buddha’s teaching. On hearing this news, Kumarila became very angry and told the king that if he won in the contest, then Dharmakirti must be put to death but Dharmakirti said that he did not want that the defeated opponent should be killed but he should become a follower of Buddha’s dharma. Dharmakirti won in the contest and deafeated also the Nirgrantha Rahuvratin, the Mimamsaka teacher Bringaraguhya, Brahmana, Kumarananda, the Brahmanical champion Kanadaroru and the rest who lived near the Vindhya mountain. He then went to a forest and resided in the heritage of Risi Matanga near Magadha. Dharmakirti went to the palace of King Pushpa and said:

“In wisdom a Dignaga, in purity of language a Chandragomin, in merits a Sura, in disputation who else could be except the humble self, the victor of all disputants” (Sura=aryasura, author of the Jatakamala).
The King Puspaasked “I wonder, are you the Dharmakirti?” He said that it is the name by which people call me. He erected many viharas for the residence of Dharmakirti. He composed also a Pramanasastra in seven chapters and he wrote at the entrance hall of the palace the words “When Dharmakirti’s sun of eloquence will go down, the faithful will go to sleep or die, the unbelievers will rise immediately”. For a long time he spread the doctrine and there were about so viharas and --- monks. When he visited Gujarata he converted many Brahmins and other sectarians to Buddhism and erected the temple of Gotapuri. In this land there were many non-Buddhists.

Dharmakirti’s dialectics was propagated in Kashmir Varanasi and also in the south. Towards the end of his life Dharmakirti built a vihara in Kalinga. This acharya was a contemporary of King Srongbtsan-sgam-po. 6

Dharmakirti’s disciple Devendrabudhi composed the commentaries of Dharmakirti’s works. His disciple was also Prabhavabodhi. Some say that Jamari was the direct disciple of Acharya Dharmakirti and that Jamari was the author of Pramana-varttika-alankara.

The number of teachers regarded as jewels of the Buddhist scholarship is six, of whom three were Nagarjuna, Asanga and Dignaga and three were commentators Aryadeva, Vasubandhu and Dharmakirti. Sankarananda appeared at a much later date, hence he could not be a direct disciple of Dharmakirti.

At that time there were five Siddhacharyas, namely, Kambala, Indrabhuti, Kururaraja, Padmavajra and Lalitavajra. Kutaraja was an old Yogacharin, practiced Ganachakra and other mysteries in the cemetery and attained Mahamudrasiddhi on the basis of the Chandraguhyabindu-tantra. He taught to his disciples the Buddhist Tantras and Yogatantras.

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Acharya Lalitavajra was a pandit of Nalanda. He brought the Yamaritantra from the dharmaganja of Udyana. He composed the Krsna-yamaritantra, Trisamvara, Saptakalpika and Kalpakramas and propagated them in Jambudvipa. The heretical prince Naravarman in the west became a believer in Buddhism, and built a temple of Manjusri. There are many stories about the contest of Kambala, Lalitavajra and Indrabhuti with others. Kambala procured the Hevajratantrasara and composed the Nairatmyasadhana.

At this time lived in the south Kamalagomin, who had attained Avalokitesvara-Siddhi.  

Acharayas of Sarvastivada Schools

Upagupta occupied a very high place in the hierarchy of the Sarvastivada school. In the Abhidharmakosavyakhya (II. 44) Upagupta is said to have composed the Netrpadasastra. His opinions were valued as those of the Sarvastivadins or the Vaibhasikas of Mathura. In conclusion, it may be stated that Upagupta was not only a versatile preacher but also an important writer of the Vaibhasik school of Mathura.

Succession of Teachers

The succession of teachers (acaryaparampara), as given in almost all Sanskrit traditions, preserved in Tibetan, it will be observed that after Sambhuta Sanavasi, the succession is recorded differently from that in Pali. Bu-ston and Tara-natha till us that Mahakassapa entrusted the guardianship of the Sangha to Ananda, who in turn entrusted the same to Sambhuta Sanavasi. The later gave over the guardianship to Upagupta of Mathura. It is well known that in the Sanskrit Avadanas, Upagupta is made the spiritual adviser of Asoka as against Moggaliputta Tissa of the Pali texts. This also lends support to the view that Mathura became the first centre of the Sarvastivadins soon after the Second Council, and
that it was from Mathura that the influence of the Sarvastivadins radiated all over Northern India, particularly over Gandhara and Kashmir.

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