THE ORIGINS OF THE MAHAYANA, AND THE LAY

Mahayana Buddhism
Basics of Mahāyāna Buddhism

The Mahāyāna Sutras
"Through four factors is an inspired utterance the word of the Buddhas. What four? (i) ...the inspired utterance is connected with truth, not untruth; (ii) it is connected with the Dharma, not that which is not the Dharma; (iii) it brings about the renunciation of moral taints not their increase; and (iv) it shows the laudable qualities of Nirvāṇa, not those of the cycle of rebirth [saṁsāra]." Śāntideva Śikṣāsamuccaya (695-743)

The Bodhisattva

The Vow:
Hence I should dispel the misery of others
Because it is suffering, just like my own,
And I should benefit others
Because they are sentient beings, just like myself.

When both myself and others
Are similar in that we wish to be happy,
What is so special about me?
Why do I strive for my happiness alone?

All misery in the world derives from
Desiring happiness for oneself;
All happiness in the world arises from
Desiring the happiness of others.

May I be the doctor and the medicine
And may I be the nurse
For all sick beings in the world
Until every one is healed.

May a rain of food and drink descend
To clear away the pain of thirst and hunger
And during the aeon of famine
May I myself change into food and drink.

I become an inexhaustible treasure
For those who are poor and destitute;
May I turn into all things they could need
And may these be placed close beside them.

(Śāntideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra)

The Vow II
However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them.
However inexhaustible the defilements, I vow to extinguish them.
However immeasurable the dharmas are, I vow to master them.
However incomparable enlightenment is I vow to attain it.
1. **Avalokiteśvara/Kwan Yin/Kannon/Chenrizi:**
   The Dharma-body of Kwan-yin
   Is neither male nor female.
   Even the body is not a body,
   What attributes can there be?...
   Let it be known to all Buddhists:
   Do not cling to form.
   The bodhisattva is you:
   Not the picture or the image. (Chinese Buddhist Poem)

2. **Tārā**
   There are many who desire Enlightenment in a man's body, but
   none who work for the benefit of sentient beings in the body
   of a woman. Therefore, until samsāra is empty, I shall work
   for the benefit of sentient beings in a woman's body.
   (Commentary of Taranatha)

3. **Samantabhadra**
   Ideal in action and devotion
   Embodying compassionate service
   in the ten sectors

4. **Mañjuśrī**
   Brandishing a sword that cuts through ignorance
   Holding the scripture that points to the truth
   Youthful Master of prajñā

5. **Ksitigarbha (J. Jizo)**
   Personification of benevolence in the six states of being
   Patron of travelers and children
Human Bodhisattva Service as defined by the Vimalakirti Sūtra:
In this human world here in a single life Bodhisattvas benefit
more living beings than do beings in heavens during a hundred
thousand world-ages. Such are the ten good dharmas found in our
world, which cannot be found elsewhere:
1. Converting the poor through generosity.
2. Converting the immoral through morality.
3. Converting the ill-tempered through patience.
4. Converting the lazy through heroic activity.
5. Converting the distracted through meditation.
6. Converting the foolish through wisdom.
7. Teaching those who have been reborn in unfavorable
   conditions to overcome these eight unfavorable conditions.
8. Teaching the Mahayana to those follow lesser ways.
9. Converting through good roots (of merit) those beings
   who have not established good roots.
10. Perfecting beings through the four means of conversion.

The Пàramitās "Perfections"
1. dāna generosity
2. śīla moral conduct
3. kṣānti patience
4. vīrya energy
5. dhyāna meditation
6. prajñā insight
7. upāya skill in practice
8. prāṇidhāna resolution
9. bāja strength
10. jñāna knowledge

-- Dharmasamgraha

Generating Bodhicitta ("Enlightenment Thought")
"May all the buddhas and bodhisattvas abiding in the ten
directions deign to take notice of me! May the master deign to
take notice of me! I, named so-and-so, by virtue of wholesome
roots developed from giving, from morality and from meditation in
this and other rebirths— that I have done, had done, or
appreciated the doing of—just as previous tathagata, arhat,
completely fulfilled lord buddhas and bodhisattvas great heroes
abiding on as high stage, first generated the thought towards
supreme, right and full awakening, so likewise, from this time
forth until reaching the site of awakening, in order to ferry
over the stranded, to release the bound, to revive the
breathless, to bring to nirvana those not yet in nirvana, I
generate a thought towards supreme, right and full great
awakening." — Chandragomin Twenty Verses on the Bodhisattva Vow
When viewed in perfect wisdom, the world, and all that it may contain, is viewed as emptiness. A good survey of the world-view of the Prajñāpāramitā is given in the Hridaya Sutra (No. 54), which is one of the finest and most profound spiritual documents of mankind.

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the lovely, the holy! Avalokita, 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. Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form; emptiness does not differ from form, nor does form differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness. Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness, they are neither produced nor stopped, neither defiled nor immaculate, neither deficient nor complete. Therefore, O Sariputra, where there is emptiness there is neither form, nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness; no eye, or ear, or nose, or tongue, or body, or mind; no form, nor sound, nor smell, nor taste, nor touchable, nor object of mind; no sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to: no mind-consciousness element; there is no ignorance, nor 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, nor origination, nor stopping, nor path; there is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.

Therefore, O Sariputra, owing to a Bodhisattva’s indifference to any kind of personal attainment, and through his having relied on the perfection of wisdom, he dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-coverings he has not been made to tremble, he has overcome what can upset, in the end sustained by Nirvana. All those who appear as Buddhas in the three periods of time,—they all fully awake to the utmost, right and perfect enlightenment because they have relied on the perfection of wisdom. Therefore one should know the Prajñāpāramitā as the great spell, the spell of great knowledge, the utmost spell, the unequalled spell, allayer of all suffering, in truth,—for what could go wrong? By the Prajñāpāramitā has this spell been delivered. It runs like this: Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, O what an awakening, all hail!
Buddha-Nature Theory

The human mind possesses the Buddha-nature that is unobtainable from others. It can be compared to a person who has a jewel in his clothes he knows not of. The nature of the mind of all beings is pure and cannot be stained by passions; it is like the sky that can never be tainted. -- Surangama Sutra

Mahāyāna Ritual

List from the Bodhicaryāvatāra:
(1) Praise of the Buddhas, (2) acts of worship, (3) confession of sin, (4) praise of virtue, (5) exhorting Buddhas to preach and asking them to delay their Nirvana, (6) rise of the thought of enlightenment, (7) transference of his own merits for the benefit of other beings.

The Bodhisattva's Confession:
Whatever sin I have done or caused to be done in numberless births or in this, whatever through my delusion I have approved to my hurt, that I confess as misdeed, and now am tortured by remorse.
Whatever sin I have committed against the three Jewels, against mother, father, or against teachers and others, in deed, word, and thought, with many vices and offences, O Guides, all that grievous sin I confess.
And how may I escape it? I am ever afflicted, O Guides, let not death come too soon upon me, ere my sin is destroyed.

The Guru and the Path

Those who do not readily drink the ambrosia of their master's instructions,
Die of thirst in the desert of multitudinous treatises.
Abandon thought and thinking and be just as a child.
Be devoted to your master's teaching and the Innate will become manifest.

-- Buddhist Master Saraha
Dharma-kaya
(Body of Law), absolute truth and reality

Vajrasattva

Sambhoga-kaya
(Body of Bliss), glorified body of transcendent Buddhas

Akshobhya

Vairocana

Amitabha

Five 'Dhyani Buddhas'

Amoghasiddhi

Avalokiteshvara
(Kannon) bringing mercy

Nirmana-kaya
(Body of Manifestation), earthly change, incarnation in human life

Gautama Buddha
(Shakyamuni)

Dipankara

Buddha-nature

personalized as Universal Buddha
(primeval Adi-Buddha)

Previous Buddhas on earth

148. The Mahayana cosmos according to the Trikaya doctrine (the 'three bodies' of Buddha) pictured in selective and schematic form.