



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class One

1) Name the author of the *Principal Teachings of Buddhism* (give both his popular name and his monk's name), as well as his dates. (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

The author of the *Principal Teachings of Buddhism* is Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419), whose monk's name was Lobsang Drakpa, or "Pure-Minded One of Wide Renown."

ཇེ་ཙོང་ཁ་པ། ལྷོ་བཟང་གྲགས་པ།

je tsongkapa lobsang drakpa

2) What is the actual name of this work? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The actual name of this work is the *Three Principal Paths*.

ལམ་གཙོ་རྣམ་གསུམ།

lamtso namsum

3) For whom was the work written (monk's name and popular name)? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Ngawang Drakpa, Tsako Wongpo

ངག་དབང་གྲགས་པ་ཚ་ཁོ་དབོན་པོ།

ngawang drakpa tsako wongpo

4) Who wrote the commentary that we are studying (give both his popular name and his special name)? What are his dates? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The commentary that we are studying was written by Pabongka Rinpoche (1878-1941), whose secret name was Dechen Nyingpo.

ཕ་བོང་ཁ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ། བདེ་ཆེན་སྡིང་པོ།
pabongka rinpoche dechen nyingpo

5) Who was this Lama in his former life?

Changkya Rolpay Dorje (1717-1786), the illustrious teacher of the Emperor of China.

6) Who is the disciple of Trijang Rinpoche who wrote the introduction? Give his full name and correct titles? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The disciple of Trijang Rinpoche who wrote the introduction is Khen Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang Tharchin (1921-).

མཁན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་དགེ་བཤེས་སློབ་བཟང་མཐར་ཕྱིན།
khen rinpoche geshe lobsang tharchin

7) What are the three "problems of the pot"?

Having the lid closed (not paying attention to what a Lama is teaching to you), being a dirty pot (having an improper motivation for being in the teaching), and being a leaky pot (not retaining what you have been taught.)

8) What are the three great divisions of the lam-rim texts (works on the Steps to Buddhahood)?

These are the three scopes: the wish to escape lower rebirths oneself (lesser scope); the wish to escape from suffering cyclic existence for oneself alone (medium scope); and the wish to attain full enlightenment to benefit all beings (greater scope).

9) Name the three principal paths. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The three principal paths are renunciation, the wish for enlightenment (or "bodhichitta"), and correct view of emptiness.

ངེས་འབྱུང་།

ngenjung

སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

semkye

ཡང་དག་པའི་ལྷ་བ།

yangdakpay tawa

10) Are they physical, mental, or are they concepts?

They are stages of mental realization.



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Two

1) Does merit necessarily lead to nirvana and Buddhahood? (Tibetan track give Tibetan term for merit.) Why or why not?

Not necessarily. If one's motivation is of a lower scope or inappropriate, the merit will lead to a good outcome, but will not necessarily lead to nirvana or Buddhahood.

བསོད་ནམས།

sunam

2) What is the Sanskrit word for the "great seal"? (Tibetan track give Tibetan term.)

Mahamudra.

ཕུག་ཆེན།

chakchen

3) Is there any relationship between the three principle paths and the great seal? Between these three and tantric practice?

"Mahamudra" means the direct perception of emptiness. Mahamudra is the natural result of practicing the three principal paths well. Tantric practice can only be successful based on the three principal paths; in fact, a person who practices the three principal paths well reaches tantric levels almost automatically.

Tantric practice is based fully on the three principal paths; so much so that, without them, one could never be successful in tantric practice; but with them, one would almost automatically succeed in this practice.

4) What are the two principal causes that bring about the state of Buddhahood? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Method (meaning the thoughts and deeds of a bodhisattva), and wisdom.

ཐབས།
tap

ཤེས་རབ།
sherab

5) What are the main elements of these two? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Method: renunciation and the wish for enlightenment; wisdom: correct view of emptiness.

ཐབས། ངེས་འགྲུང་དང་སེམས་བསྐྱེད།
tap, ngenjung dang semkye

ཤེས་རབ། ཡང་དག་པའི་ལྷ་བ།
sherab, yangdakpay tawa

6) What are the two bodies of a Buddha? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The two bodies of a Buddha are the physical "body" or part of an enlightened being, known in Sanskrit as the *rupa kaya*; and the combination of the mental and ultimate-nature parts of a Buddha, known in Sanskrit as the *dharma kaya*.

གཟུགས་སྐུ།
suk-ku

ཚེས་སྐུ།
chu-ku

7) Name the two causes of the two bodies. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The collection of wisdom is the cause for a Buddha's wisdom body; the collection of merit is the cause of a Buddha's form body.

ཚོས་སྐྱུ། ཡེ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས།

chu-ku, yeshe kyi tsok

གཟུགས་སྐྱུ། བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས།

su-ku, sunam kyi tsok

8) Which of the three principal paths cause each of these two bodies?

Renunciation and the wish for enlightenment contribute primarily to the physical "body" or part of an enlightened being, and correct view contributes primarily to the mental and ultimate-nature parts of a Buddha.

9) What are the two obstacles to Buddhahood? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Obstacles to omniscience and obstacles to reaching freedom from mental afflictions.

ཤེས་སྒྲིབ།

shedrip

ཉོན་སྒྲིབ།

nyundrip

10) Why was Je Tsongkapa able to write 10,000 pages of incredibly deep and difficult explanation of Buddhism?

He had direct communication with the enlightened being named Gentle Voice (Manjushri).



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Three

1) Name the ten characteristics of a qualified lama. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) They should be a person who "controls themselves well," meaning they practice the extraordinary training of an ethical way of life very well.

དུལ་བ།

dulwa

- b) They should be a person who is "at peace," meaning they have achieved a high degree of the extraordinary training of meditative concentration.

ཞི་བ།

shiwa

- c) They should be a person who has "high peace," meaning they practice the extraordinary training of wisdom to a high degree.

ཉེས་ཞི་བ།

nyer shiwa

- d) They should have "spiritual qualities which exceed" those of their student, so that they can help them.

ཡོན་ཏན་ལྷན་པ།

yunten hlakpa

- e) They should be willing to make "great efforts," or take great joy in helping their students.

བརྩོན་བཅས།

tsunche

- f) They should be "rich in scripture," or have a deep knowledge of the sacred books.

ལུང་གིས་ལྷུག།

lung gi chuk

- g) They should have a "deep realization of suchness," meaning they should either have perceived emptiness directly, or at least have an excellent scriptural and intellectual understanding of it.

དེ་ཉིད་རབ་རྟོགས།

de-nyi rabtok

- h) They should be a "master instructor," meaning they know their student's capacity well, and fit the amount and order of spiritual information to this capacity.

སློམ་ཁལས་ལྷན།

make den

- i) They should be the "image of love," teaching the Dharma out of love for students, and not for any worldly motives.

བརྩེ་བའི་བདག་ཉིད།

tseway daknyi

j) They should be "beyond becoming discouraged," never tiring of repeating teachings if necessary to the student.

ལྷོ་བ་ཕྱངས།

kyowa pang



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Four

1) Name the three characteristics of an authentic teaching, one which is appropriate to make your practice successful. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

A teaching which you decide to practice should have three distinguishing features:

a) It should have been taught by the Buddha.

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱིས་གསུངས་པ།

sanggye kyi sungpa

b) It should have been cleaned of any errors: sages must have brought the teaching to its authentic final form, having examined it to determine whether any wrong ideas crept into it after the Buddha taught it.

པཎ্ডི་ཏས་གཏན་ལ་ཕབ་པ།

pandite ten la pappa

c) It should have brought true realizations to the hearts of master practitioners, once they have heard, considered, and meditated upon it. And then it must have passed to us through the various generations of an unbroken lineage.

གྲུབ་པའི་བླ་མ་གྱིས་རྒྱུད་ལ་འབྲུངས་དང་རིམ་གྱིས་བརྒྱུད་པ།

druppay tukgyu la trung dang rimgyi gyupa

2) List the three requirements of a good student as found in Aryadeva's *400 Verses*. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) They are free of preconceptions, willing to try to see things a new way.

གཟུང་གནས།

surne

b) They are intelligent, especially in a spiritual sense.

སྒོ་ལྷན།

londen

c) They have high spiritual aspirations in life, and are willing to work hard to reach them.

དོན་གཉེར་བ།

dunmyerwa



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Five

1) Define what is meant by "cycle of life," or *samsara* in Sanskrit. (Tibetan track give the Tibetan word.)

The condition of being forced, through the power of karma and mental afflictions, to take on the impure parts that make up a suffering being, over and over again.

འཁོར་བ།

korwa

2) Why is renunciation necessary to escape the cycle of life? What is the relationship between renunciation and the wish to achieve enlightenment for all beings?

Renunciation is the true understanding that everything about your life is suffering. If you don't believe that your life is suffering, you will not try to escape it. Once you have understood how you are suffering, you can think of how others must be suffering the same way. This then leads to the wish to free them from this suffering, and bring them to every happiness.

3) Two of the steps of the path are meant to stop desire for this life. Name them. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Meditation on (1) the great importance of this life of leisure and fortune, along with the difficulty of finding it; and (2) our impermanence, the fact that we must die.

དལ་འབྱོར་དོན་ཆེ་སྤྲོད་དཀའ།

delnjor dunche nyeka

ཆེ་བ་མི་རྟག་པ།

chiwa mitakpa

4) List the eight worldly thoughts. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Being happy when we acquire some thing,

ལྷོད་བཀུར་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།
nyekur jung na ga

b) And unhappy when we don't.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།
majung na miga

c) Being happy when we feel good,

བདེ་བ་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།
dewa jung na ga

d) And unhappy when we don't.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།
majung na miga

e) Being happy when we become well known,

སྣན་བྲགས་བྱུང་ན་དགའ།
nyendrak jung na ga

f) And unhappy when we don't.

མ་བྱུང་ན་མི་དགའ།
majung na miga

g) Being happy when someone speaks well of us,

བསྐྱོད་ར་བྱང་ན་དགའ།

tura jung na ga

h) And unhappy when they don't.

མ་བྱང་ན་མི་དགའ།

majung na miga



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Six

1) Name the four principles of action (or *karma*.) (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Actions are certain to produce similar results.

ལས་ངེས་པ།

le ngepa

b) The consequences are greater than the actions.

ལས་འཕེལ་ཆེ་བ།

le pel chewa

c) One cannot meet a consequence if he or she has not committed an action.

ལས་མ་བྱས་པ་དང་མི་འཕྲད་པ།

le majepa dang mi trepa

d) Once an action is committed, the consequence cannot be lost.

བྱས་པ་རྒྱུད་མི་ཟ་བ།

jepa chu misawa

2) List the six sufferings of a human life. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The problem that life has no certainty.

ངེས་པ་མེད་པ།

ngepa mepa

b) The problem that we always want more than we have.

ངོམས་པ་མེད།

ngompa me

c) The problem that we have to keep shucking off bodies, over and over again.

ལུས་ཡང་ནས་ཡང་དུ་འདོར་བ།

lu yangne yangdu dorwa

d) The problem that we have to keep going into a new life, over and over again.

ཡང་ཡང་ཉིང་མཚམས་སྒྱུར་བ།

yang yang nyingtsam jorwa

e) The problem that we go up and down in our fortunes in life, over and over again.

ཡང་ཡང་མཐོ་དམན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ།

yang yang tomen du gyurwa

f) The problem that no one can come along with us; ultimately we are alone.

གྲོགས་མེད་པ།

drok mepa

3) What is the point at which you know you have developed true renunciation?

When you think day and night of achieving freedom, and no longer have any attraction to the so-called "good" things of this life.



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Seven

1) Give an explanation of the two parts of the word "bodhichitta." Does it refer to the mind of a buddha? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

"Bodhi" means "enlightenment," or "Buddhahood," and "chitta" means "mind" or "thoughts." Together, the words mean "the wish to become enlightened [for every living being]." It does *not* mean "Buddha mind" in the sense of a mind which has already reached Buddhahood, or a mind which is somehow already enlightened and only needs to be seen as enlightened.

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས།

jangchub kyi sem

also spelled as:

སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

semkye

2) When do you become a bodhisattva?

You become a bodhisattva when you reach the true thought to reach enlightenment for the benefit of every living being.

3) Has every bodhisattva seen emptiness directly?

No; you can become a bodhisattva (or achieve the true wish to become a Buddha to help every living being) long before you perceive emptiness directly.

4) Can you reach nirvana (meaning become an arhat, and remove all your mental afflictions) before you become a bodhisattva?

Yes; you can reach nirvana on a hinayana path before you become a bodhisattva.

5) Name at least six benefits of developing the wish for enlightenment. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Any six of the following nine may be listed:

དག་བ་ནམ་མཁུན་གྱི་རྒྱ།
ge-ba nam-kyen gyi gyu

a) If you have this wish, then all your good deeds become a cause for omniscience.

ལྷ་མི་ཕྱག་བྱར་འོས་བ།
hla mi chak jar u-pa

b) You become a person worthy of the honor of all beings.

ཉན་རང་ཟླིས་གཞོན་པ།
nyen rang sil-gyi nu-pa

c) You outshine practitioners of the lower paths, known as "hearers" and "solitary realizers," who—although they can reach high attainments such as the direct perception of emptiness, and nirvana—have not yet reached the true wish to reach full enlightenment for others.

དག་བ་ཚུང་ཟང་ཐེག་ཆེན་གྱི་ཚོས།
ge-wa chung-se tek-chen gyi chu

d) The tiniest good deed you ever do, such as feeding a scrap of food to a bird, becomes a spiritual practice of the greater way (the Mahayana.)

རྒྱལ་སྐྱུ་གྱི་སྤྱོད་པ།
gye-se kyi chu-pa

e) The good deeds you do become the activity of a bodisattva.

སངས་རྒྱལ་ལྷན་གྱི་སྲས་སུ་དགོངས།
sang-gye nam kyi se-su gong

f) The Buddhas then look upon you as their own son or daughter.

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པ་ལྷན་གྱི་སྲུ་དུ་དགོངས།
jang-chub sem-pa nam kyi pun du gong

g) All the bodhisattvas then consider you their own brother or sister.

ཐེག་ཆེན་ལ་བཞུགས།
tek-chen la shuk

h) By achieving the wish, you have entered into the "Greater Way," or the "Mahayana" (literally, the "big capacity"; meaning you have taken on a greater responsibility, to help all living beings).

ཚེ་གཅིག་ལ་སངས་རྒྱལ།
tse chik la sang-gye

i) If you have the wish for enlightenment, it is possible that you will reach enlightenment in one lifetime—because you will be able to practice the secret teachings of Buddhism (tantra) and it will work.



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Eight

1) Give the seven steps in the cause-and-effect method for developing the wish for enlightenment; explain briefly why each is necessary for the next. (Tibetan track name the seven steps in Tibetan, and explain in English.)

- a) **Recognize that all living beings have been your mother. Equanimity is necessary to do this because, if you hold some close and others distant, you cannot see *everyone* as a kind mother, deserving your ultimate help—you would exclude some people.**

མར་ཤེས།

marshé

- b) **Remember the kindness they have given you when they were your mothers. The first step leads to this one because, if you do not see everyone as having been your mother in the past, then you cannot see everyone as having been kind—you won't think about the good they did for you, if you don't see them all in a beneficent role.**

དྲིན་དྲན།

drindren

- c) **Decide to repay the kindness of your mothers. The second step leads to this one in that—if you don't see your mother as having been kind to you—then you have no reason to pay her back.**

དྲིན་གཟོ།

drinso

- d) Love all people with the intensity of a mother for her only child, and wish that they could have every good thing. The previous three points lead to this, for once you recognize everyone as mother, acknowledge her kindness and your debt, and agree to help her in return, the natural result is to want to give her every good thing.

ཡིད་འོང་བྱམས་པ།

yi-ong jampa

- e) Feel great compassion for all living beings; want them to be free of suffering. The fourth step is a cause for this because—if you do not want them to be happy, to the point of intense love—then you have no reason to want them to be free of suffering.

སྙིང་ཇེ་ཆེན་པོ།

nyingje chenpo

- f) Decide to help everyone even if you have to do it all yourself; regardless of the difficulty, without being discouraged, if no one helps you. The fifth step is a cause for this sixth one because—if you do not want them to be free of suffering—you will certainly not choose to remove their suffering.

ལྷག་བསམ་རྣམ་དག།

hlaksam namdak

- g) Achieve the wish to become enlightened for the sake of every living being; that is, develop bodhichitta and become a bodhisattva. The previous step is the cause for this since—once you are determined to help everyone—then you must gain the capacity to do so, by becoming a fully enlightened Buddha.

བྱང་ལྷུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས།

jangchub kyi sem

also spelled as:

སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

semkye

- 2) Describe the preliminary practice that precedes these seven.

One must develop equanimity towards everyone, seeing them as no better or worse, attractive or undesirable than each other. During countless lifetimes over limitless time up to the present, each person has been all things to everyone else, and so everyone ultimately has an equal relationship.



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Nine

1) Name the two truths, and describe them briefly. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) **Ultimate truth (ultimate reality):** The emptiness of all things; that is, the fact that they are not anything which is *not* simply a projection forced upon you by your past karma.

དོན་དམ་བདེན་པ།

dundam denpa

- b) **Deceptive truth (deceptive reality, sometimes mistakenly referred to as "relative truth"):** all of the normal objects around you, which seem to exist from their own side, or through some nature of their own, but do not, and are therefore "deceptive."

གཏུན་ཚོབ་བདེན་པ།

kuntzob denpa

2) Explain what "interdependence" (also sometimes called "dependent origination") means in each of the three Buddhist schools mentioned below. (Tibetan track students give Tibetan word for "interdependence.")

- a) **Functionalist Group:** Things are interdependent in the sense that changing things depend on their causes and conditions. This explanation fails to cover the interdependence of unchanging objects such as empty space or emptiness. (This group consists of the first three classical Buddhist schools of ancient India: the Detailist or Abhidharma School; the Sutrists or Logic and Perceptual Theory School; and the Mind-Only School.)

- b) **Independent Group:** Things are interdependent in the sense that all objects, changing or unchanging, depend on their parts. This is a comprehensive explanation, but not one which imparts the ultimate meaning of interdependence. (This group consists of the lower half of the Middle Way or Madhyamika School, known as the "Independent" or Svatantrika group.)

- c) **Implication Group:** Things are interdependent in the sense that they are a result of our projecting onto a basis of our projection. This is the ultimate meaning of interdependence. (This group consists of the upper half of the Middle Way or Madhyamika School, known as the "Consequence" or Prasangika group.)

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tendrel

- 3) Buddhism teaches that no "self" exists. Give a description of this non-existent "self" or self-nature, according to Master Chandrakirti. (Tibetan track students give the Tibetan word for "self.")

A "self" or me does exist; there is someone who is reading this homework right now. But there is no "self" or "me" which exists from its own side, through any nature of its own, independent of the projections forced upon me by my karma.

བདག

dak



COURSE I
The Principal Teachings of Buddhism

Answer Key, Class Ten

1) Can the idea of karma (that is, ethics or morality) co-exist with the idea of emptiness, or do they contradict each other? (Tibetan track give the words for "morality" and for "emptiness" in Tibetan)

These two ideas are two sides of the same coin: things are "empty" in the sense of being like a blank screen. Whether I see them one way or another depends on my own projections, forced upon me by my past deeds, words, and thoughts. Therefore karma and emptiness are completely intertwined, and anyone who understands emptiness understands the need to be absolutely moral in their everyday life.

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tsultrim

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tongpa-nyi

2) Suppose you can understand that there is no "self." How does that help you stop your bad emotions, and reach freedom? (Tibetan track students give words for "bad thoughts" and for "object to be denied.")

Suppose that your boss yells at you at work. If you understand that no self exists, you understand that this unpleasant experience is not coming from its own side. Rather, he is like an empty screen, and you are forced by your own past karma to see him as bad. Someone else in the room who has better karma may be seeing this as a pleasant experience; for example, thinking that the boss is kindly correcting an employee to help them improve. When you realize this fact, you realize that—if you yell back at the boss—you will make new bad karma that will make you see him yelling again in the future. Being an educated Buddhist, you realize that the best course of action is to respond kindly and patiently. If you keep up this way of behaving, you will fairly quickly reach nirvana.

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nyunmong

དགག་བྱ།

gakja