



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class One

1) Give the names of the root text and commentary we are going to use for our study of the perfections of patience, effort, and meditation; also name their authors and give their dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

We will use as a root text the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Bodhisattvacharyavatara)* and as a commentary the *Entry Point for Children of the Victorious Buddhas*. The former was written by the Indian Buddhist master Shantideva (c. 700 AD), and the latter by one of the principal disciples of Je Tsongkapa, named Gyaltsab Je Dharma Rinchen (1364-1432).

གུང་རྒྱུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྣོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།

jangchub sempay chupa la jukpa

རྒྱལ་སྐུས་འཇུག་དོགས།

gyelse juk-ngok

2) Describe the principal problem of anger that we cannot see directly. (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

The principal problem of anger that we cannot see directly is that a single instance of anger focused at a bodhisattva destroys thousands of eons of good karma that we have amassed previously; and we cannot be sure who around is a bodhisattva.

གུང་རྒྱུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ལ་དམིགས་པའི་ཁོང་ཁྱོད་གཅིག་གིས་དགོ་ཚུ་ཚུ་བ་ནས་

འཇོམས་པར་བྱེད་པ།

jangchub sempa la mikpay kongtro chik gi ge-tsa tsawa ne jompar jepa

3) Quote from memory the lines that describe the immediate cause of anger, and the usefulness of this cause. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**If there is something
You can do about it,
Why should you feel upset?**

**If there is nothing
You can do about it,
What use is being upset?**

།གལ་ཏེ་བཅོས་སུ་ཡོད་ན་ནི།

།དེ་ལ་མི་དགའ་ཅི་ཞིག་ཡོད།

།གལ་ཏེ་བཅོས་སུ་མེད་ན་ནི།

།དེ་ལ་མི་དགའ་བྱས་ཅི་ཕན།

*gelte chusu yu na ni
de la migar chishik yu
gelte chusu me na ni
de la miga je chi pen*

4) Relate and explain the example used to demonstrate that patience is a state of mind.

Some people, warriors in battle, become even more ferocious when they see their own blood spilled. Other people, cowards, faint even at the sight of other people's blood being spilled. There is no difference in the blow that caused the wound, or the body that took the wound, only in the states of mind of the respective persons.

5) Could an uncreated, unchanging being ever create itself?

No, because by definition it would change by the act of producing an effect.

6) Could an uncreated, unchanging being ever produce something else?

No; because it was never produced itself, it cannot produce something else.

7) Could an uncreated, unchanging being ever experience or be aware of any other object?

No, because it would have to be unwaveringly aware of every object, since it never changes.

8) Could our world or the objects and people in it who make us angry ever have been created without a cause?

It is completely illogical and impossible for a changing thing not to have been created by a cause.

9) Name the direct cause for our pain when someone hits us with a stick, and then the thing which impelled this direct cause. At which should we be angry?

The direct cause for our pain is the stick or whatever; the thing that impels it is the anger of the person who swings it; so we should be angry not at the person or the stick, but at his or her anger, an emotion which we also share.

10) Give the reasoning that Master Shantideva gives to demonstrate that we should cherish the opportunity which we get to practice the Dharma when we meet irritating people. (Tibetan track use two lines from the root text to answer.)

Those who give us a chance to practice patience are relatively much more rare than poor people, since if we do not respond with anger then we cannot meet them in the future.

།འདི་ལྟར་ཡང་གཞོན་མ་བྱས་ན།

།འགའ་ཡང་གཞོན་པ་མི་བྱེད་དོ།

ditar parnu majena

gayang nupa mije do

11) Name the single highest method of repaying the kindness of the Buddhas.

Doing good to living beings is the single highest method.

12) Give the brief definition of effort stated in Master Shantideva's root text. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

"What is effort? It is joy in doing good."

བཙུན་གང་དག་ལ་སྣོ་བའོ།

tsun gang gela trowa-o

13) Give the definition of innate Buddha nature, which is what guarantees that we will become a Buddha; then explain why it provides us this guarantee. (Tibetan track name and give definition in Tibetan, then explain in English.)

The definition of innate Buddha nature is "that thing which is emptiness, and which will become the essence body of a Buddha." The fact that our minds have emptiness, and are blank by nature, is what makes it possible for extraordinary good karma to cause us to see ourselves as omniscient in the future.

ཚོས་དབྱིངས་གང་ཞིག་ ། རོ་བོ་ཉིད་སྐྱར་འགྱུར་རུང་།

chuying gang shik, ngowo nyikur gyur rung

རང་བཞིན་གནས་རིགས་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད།

rangshin nerik kyi tsennyi

14) Quote the verse that Master Shantideva uses to describe how to become accustomed to great bodhisattva deeds gradually.

The Guide has sent us at the beginning
To do our acts of giving
With vegetables and the like.
When we've become accustomed to that
Then later on we'll gradually be able
To give away even our flesh.

ཁོད་མ་ལ་སོགས་སྤྱིན་པ་ལའང་།

འདྲིན་པས་ཐོག་མར་སྤྱོར་བར་མཛད།

དེ་ལ་གོམས་ནས་སྤྱི་ནས་ནི།

རིམ་གྱིས་རང་གི་ཤ་ཡང་གཏོང་།

*tsuma lasok jinpa la-ang
drenpe tokmar jorwar dze
dela gomme chine ni
rimgyi ranggi shayang tong*



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Two

1) What is Master Shantideva's reasoning for saying that we should be willing to undertake our deeds on behalf of living beings all by ourselves, even if no one else helps us?

He says that, since the great majority of living beings have no idea at all what they should do even to help themselves, for they are at the complete mercy of their mental afflictions, it is no surprise that they might be unwilling to help us in deeds meant to aid all other beings. Therefore we should be ready at all times to undertake our virtuous deeds gladly by ourselves, without any help from anyone else at all.

2) Relate and explain the metaphor of the razor and the honey. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.).

The honey consists of all the attractive sense objects of this realm ; the razor is the fact that they cannot satisfy us, no matter how much we consume them, and ultimately they lead us to negative deeds that cause more of the circle of suffering.

སྐྱུ་གྱི་འི་སོར་ཆགས་པའི་སྤྲང་རྩི་བཞིན།

འདོད་པ་རྣམས་ནས་ངོམས་པ་མེད།

pu-driy sor chakpay drang-tsi shin

dupa nam ne ngompa me

3) What reasoning does Master Shantideva use to prove that we are capable of watching our minds closely and keeping them away from anger and the like?

Suppose a person gave us a bowl of oil and told us to walk across a room with it, and then followed us with a sword at our neck, and told us he would slice our throats if we spilled even a single drop. We would never spill the drop. This proves that, if we set our minds to it, we are capable of extraordinary concentration in avoiding mental afflictions, if we really want to.

4) Name the meditational level or platform you must reach and maintain in order to see emptiness directly. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The level is known as "No lack of time" (*michokme*); it is a preliminary stage (*nyerdok*) within the first concentration level (*samten dangpo*), a kind of meditation which would normally lead to a form-realm birth. Its complete name in Tibetan therefore is *samten dangpoy nyerdok michokme*.

མི་ལྷོགས་མེད།

michokme

ཉེར་བསྐྱོགས།

nyerdok

བསམ་གཏན་དང་པོ།

samten dangpo

བསམ་གཏན་དང་པོའི་ཉེར་བསྐྱོགས་མི་ལྷོགས་མེད།

samten dangpoy nyerdok michokme

5) List the five obstacles to a meditative state of mind, by quoting the relevant lines from the *Letter to a Friend*, written by the realized being Nagarjuna. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

. . .the five obstacles to meditation:
Restless desire and missing a person or thing;
Feelings of malice; drowsiness and dullness;
Attraction to sense objects; and unresolved doubts.

།འགོད་དང་འགྲོད་དང་གཞོད་སེམས་རྣམས་པ་དང་།

།གཉིད་དང་འདོད་ལ་འདུན་དང་ཐེ་ཚོམ་སྟེ།

།སྐྱིབ་པ་ལྷུ་པོ་...

*gu dang gyu dang nusem mukpa dang
nyi dang du la dun dang te-tsom te
drippa ngapo...*

6) Master Shantideva describes the joys of living in forest solitude, and then urges us to spend our time there in the woods, in gentle walks and thoughts of helping others through developing the wish for enlightenment. What method does Master Shantideva recommend first for meditating upon this wish? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

He recommends first the practice of learning to treat ourselves and others exactly the same.

བདག་གཞན་མཉམ་པ།

dakshen nyampa

7) Relate and explain the metaphor that Master Shantideva uses to counter the objection that we could never learn to think of all the different kinds of beings as "me."

He gives the metaphor of the different parts of the body, such as the hands and legs. Even though they are many different parts, we still conceive of them as one body belonging to one person, and something that we should care for as we care for our body. Just so we should work to assure the happinesses and remove the sufferings of each and every type of being, since we can learn to think of them as "me."

8) How does Master Shantideva address the objection that we could never learn to treat ourselves and others exactly the same, since their pain does not hurt us, and our pain does not hurt them?

He notes that the fact that we find our own pain unbearable is simply a result of the habit of conceptualizing ourselves as we do. He says that, even though their pains do not touch us directly, we can learn to feel that the pains of all beings are unbearable if we learn to conceptualize all of them as ourselves.

9) What are the two very famous reasons that Master Shantideva gives to show that it is very wrong for us to work to get happiness only for ourselves, and remove only our own suffering? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The reasons are that we are no different: we are all completely the same in wanting happiness, and completely the same in wanting to avoid suffering. Given that we are completely the same, there is no logic to working to achieve only my own happiness and to avoid only my own suffering.

བདག་དང་གཞན་གཉིས་ཀ་བདེ་བ་འདོད་དུ་མཚུངས་པ་དང་།

སྐྱབས་བསྐྱེལ་མི་འདོད་པར་མཚུངས་པ།

*dak dang shen nyika dewa du du tsungpa dang,
dukngel mindupar tsungpa*

10) What reason does Master Shantideva give for saying that, eventually, we won't think of working for others as anything amazing, nor feel any conceit for doing so. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

When we come to see others as ourselves, then we won't find it amazing or find any reason for conceit when we care for them: a person does not congratulate himself for feeding himself his own supper.

རང་གི་ཟས་ཟོས་ནས་ལན་ལ་རི་བ་མི་རྒྱལ།

rang gi se su ne len la rewa migyap



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Three

1) Explain why good and bad deeds are like an illusion, and yet still function perfectly well.

They work just as well as we thought they did before we found out they were illusory. They are like an illusion because the person doing them, the deed itself, and the object of the deed all exist only in our projections. They function perfectly well though to produce the bodies of a Buddha.

2) Name the two forms in which a person can possess a mental affliction. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

They can be manifest, or else they can exist as a potential, waiting to happen.

མངོན་གྱུར་བ།

ngun gyurwa

བག་ལ་ཉལ་བ།

bakla nyelwa

3) Relate the six-step process described by Maitreya which links the failure to perceive emptiness to the suffering we must go through. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) One possesses the mental potential for the two forms of grasping to self-existence, from one's former life.

བདག་འཇོན་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བག་ཆགས་ཡོད།

dakdzin nyi kyi bakchak yu

- b) These ripen and cause you to have the two kinds of grasping to self-existence.

བདག་འཇོན་གཉིས་སྐྱེས།
dakdzin nyi kye

- c) These cause you to focus on nice things and ugly things as if they existed from their own side.

རང་ངོས་ནས་གྲུབ་པའི་ཡིད་འོང་བ་དང་ཡིད་མི་འོང་དུ་ཚུལ་མིན་ཡིད་བྱེད་སྐྱེས།
rang-ngu ne druppay yi-ongwa dang yi-mi-ong du

- d) This causes ignorant liking and ignorant disliking to start.

འདོད་ཆགས་དང་ཞེ་སྤང་སྐྱེས།
duchak dang shedang kye

- e) These cause you to do bad deeds and collect karma.

ལས་བསགས།
le sak

- f) Karma forces you to wander around in the circle of suffering.

འཁོར་བར་འཁོར།
korwar kor

4) How does Master Shantideva answer the concern that meditating upon emptiness might feel a little scary? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

He points out that the tendency to see things as self-existent is the cause of all the suffering in the world, and so if we are going to be frightened, we should be frightened at it. The wisdom which realizes emptiness, on the other hand, is the cause of ending all the pain in the world, and thus all the fear in the world—and so we *must* meditate upon it.

བདེན་པར་འཇིན་པ་སྐྱབ་བསྐྱལ་སྐྱེད་བྱེད།

སྣོང་ཉིད་ཚོགས་པ་སྐྱབ་བསྐྱལ་ཞི་བྱེད།

denpar dzinpa dukngel kyeje

tong-nyi tokpa dukngel shi-je

5) Name and define the two forms of the tendency to grasp things as existing in truth. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The "learned" form of the tendency to grasp things as existing in truth; a tendency to believe that things have their own nature which depends primarily upon the mind being affected by specific philosophical beliefs.

གཙོ་བོར་གྲུབ་མཐས་སྣོ་བསྐྱར་བ་ལ་སྣོས་དགོས་པའི་བདེན་འཇིན་ནི།

བདེན་འཇིན་ཀུན་བརྟགས།

tsowor drupte lo gyurwa la tu gupay dendzin, dendzin kun-tak

b) The "innate" form of the tendency to believe that things have their own nature which has existed in our minds for beginningless time, and which is possessed by all normal living beings, both those whose minds have been or have not been affected by specific philosophical beliefs.

ཐོག་མ་མེད་པ་ནས་ཇི་སྲིད་ལྟོགས་པ། བྱེད་མཁུན་སྲོ་བསྐྱར་མ་
བསྐྱར་གཉིས་ག་ལ་ཡོད་པའི་བདེན་འཛིན་ནི། བདེན་འཛིན་ལྷན་སྐྱེས།
tokma mepa ne jesu shukpa, drupte lo gyur ma-gyur nyi-ga
la yupay dendzin, dendzin hlenkye

6) At what point does a person on the Mahayana track eliminate each of these two? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The learned form is eliminated during the path of seeing (*tong-lam*); that is, although one still sees things as self-existent after coming down from the direct perception of emptiness, one no longer believes that they are—one knows that one is not seeing things correctly. During the eighth bodhisattva level (*sa gyepa*), one eliminates the manifest form of the innate form.

མཐོང་ལམ།
tong-lam

ས་བརྒྱད་པ།
sa gyepa

7) Name three wrong ideas that we might have about ourselves that are classified as "learned" tendencies to see things as truly existing. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The tendency to see the person and his parts as being like a master and his servants; this would correspond to the idea of a "soul" or a "me" which is totally distinct from the parts of the person.

གང་ཟག་དང་ཕུང་པོ་ཇི་བོ་དང་ཁོ་ལ་པོ་བཞིན་དུ་འཛིན་པ།
gangsak dang pungpo jowo dang kolpo shindu dzinpa

- b) **The tendency to hold that our ultimate reality lies in objectively real, partless atoms; this would correspond to the materialist view of modern science, or explaining the fine points of perception as being chemically based.**

རྒྱལ་ཕྱན་ཆ་མེད་དུ་འཛིན་པ།
dultren chame du dzinpa

- c) **The tendency to hold that our ultimate reality lies in moments of consciousness which are objectively real and partless; this would correspond to our sense of a self beyond our parts.**

ཤེས་པ་རྒྱན་ཅིག་ཆ་མེད་དུ་འཛིན་པ།
shepa kechik chame du dzinpa

8) No Buddhist school agrees that there is a person which is distinct from the physical and mental parts of a person, but the Middle Way says that we are further neither any single one of our parts, nor the whole of the parts. It's easy to see that we are not any one of our parts, such as an arm or a leg, but why is it the case that we are not the sum of all of our various parts?

The total sum of all the parts of a person is not the person until the image of the whole has been imposed upon these parts by the projections forced upon us by our past karma.

9) Why does the non-Buddhist opponent in the ninth chapter say that the person must be unchanging?

They say that, if the person is something that begins and ends by the moment, then the person who committed the karma is gone by the moment after the deed. As such, there would be no one to experience the consequence of the karma.

10) Give three parts of the answer that Master Shantideva say in reply to this position. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) He says that both the non-Buddhists and the Buddhists agree that the person who committed the deed is not the same as the person who experiences its karmic consequences, so the argument is meaningless.

ལས་བྱེད་པའི་དུས་དང་འབྲས་བུ་སློང་བའི་དུས་ཀྱི་གང་ཟག་རྗེས་ཐ་དད།

le jepay du dang drebu nyongway du kyi gangsak dze tade

- b) He points out that the only other choice is that the cause (the deed) and the result (the karmic consequence) would have to exist at the same time, which is impossible.

སྐྱུའི་དུས་སུ་འབྲས་བུ་སློང་མི་སྲིད།

gyuy du su drebu nyong misi

- c) He says that it is perfectly appropriate to refer to the continuous stream of the one who performs the karma and the one who experiences its consequences as one person.

སྐྱུ་གཅིག་ལ་ལས་བྱེད་པ་པོ་དང་འབྲས་བུ་སློང་པ་པོ་བསྟན་རུང་།

gyun chik la le jepapo dang drebu chupapo ten rung

11) What then is the real nature of the "me"? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

It is an image or a concept imposed upon a collection of parts.

ཆ་ཤས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཐ་སྐྱེད་བཏགས་ཅོམ།

cha she kyi tsok pa la tenne ta-nye tak tsam



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Four

1) At this point in the text, Master Shantideva moves from a major discussion of one kind of emptiness to another. The distinction between the two is the answer to a natural question raised in our minds when we begin to examine the emptiness of any object, especially our own selves. State the question, and describe briefly the two kinds of emptiness. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

When we understand that we are only a concept imposed on a collection of parts by force of our past karma, we begin to wonder whether the "raw data" itself is also a concept imposed on its own parts (*gangsak gi dakshi yang takyu yinnam*): that is, we begin to draw the distinction between the emptiness of us (*gangsak gi dakme*) and the emptiness of our parts (*chu kyi dakme*).

གང་ཟག་གི་གདགས་གཞི་ཡང་བདགས་ཡོད་ཡིན་ནམ།

gangsak gi dakshi yang takyu yinnam?

གང་ཟག་གི་བདག་མིང།

gangsak gi dakme

ཚོས་ཀྱི་བདག་མིང།

chu kyi dakme

2) When you focus upon the whole, such as the body, why do the parts or "raw data," such as the colors and shapes of the body, seem to exist out there, really, independently, on their own? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Because at this level we are only perceiving these parts with a conventional or deceptive perception, without examining their real nature.

མ་བདགས་མ་དབྱེད་པར་ཐ་སྐད་པའི་ཚད་མས་གྲུབ།

matak machepar ta-nyepay tseme drup

3) What do we call the process of going down in levels through the parts, and the parts of the parts, and so on, as a method to establish that things are actually empty? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

When we look for (self-existent) "raw data" that is the object that we projected on to, we don't find anything, (and thereby establish, in yet another way, the truth of emptiness).

ཐ་སྐྱད་བཏགས་པའི་བཏགས་དོན་བཅའ་བའི་ཚེ་ན་མ་རྟོན།

ta-nye takpay takdun tselway tse-na ma-nye

4) What do we tend to think of as the ultimate "raw data" for each of the two great divisions of a person? (These are the same as the two things which lower schools of Buddhism believe have some existence from their own side). (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) The atoms that, at any given moment, make up what we call our physical bodies.

གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཚོགས་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཕྱ་རབ།

suk kyi tsokpay dul tra-rab

b) The stream of present moments of awareness that, over a lifetime, make up what we call our minds.

ཤེས་པའི་སྐྱད་ཅིག་མའི་རྒྱུན།

shepay kechikmay gyun

5) Why don't either of these two kinds of raw data exist?

What we imagine as the most basic building blocks of all physical matter—atoms—are only a projection onto smaller parts, each side of the atom, and so on, endlessly. What we imagine as the most basic unit of awareness—the present moment—is only a projection onto its start, its duration, and its end, and so on, endlessly.

6) What really then provides the raw data of all existence, for every level of mental or physical objects?

Projections forced upon us by our past karma, at every level.

7) Are things therefore less real? How can this be confirmed?

Not at all. We can confirm this through our direct experience of pain or pleasure; for example, by standing in front of a fast-moving taxi cab.

8) What is the whole point of looking at the world this way? Why is this the only worldview that works?

We can do good deeds, plant good karmic seeds, and create a Buddha paradise, angel body and perfect mind and compassion: reach the end of suffering births, aging, illness, and death, as promised by Lord Buddha.

9) Why will suffering ultimately be eliminated in every living being? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Because its root is a misperception of the true nature of things; being a misperception, it is totally inferior to and powerless compared to correct view, its ultimately powerful antidote.

སྐྱུག་བསྐྱེལ་གྱི་རྒྱུར་གྱུར་པའི། དངོས་པོའི་གནས་ལུགས་ལ་སྤྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ཏུ་ཞུགས་
པའི་བདེན་འཛིན་དམན་པ་དེ་ལ་གཉེན་པོ་སློབས་ལྡན་ཡོད་པའི་ཕྱིར།

*dukngel gyi gyur gyurpay, ngupuy neluk la chinchi loktu shugpay dendzin menpa
de la nyenpo topden yupay chir*

10) Give a general description of the object which the Middle Way denies—that is, describe what it is that emptiness is empty of—and give a metaphor for it. (Tibetan track describe and also name in Tibetan.)

The object denied by Middle Way (*gakja*) is a self-existent thing: a thing which could exist without being a group of parts that we are forced by our past karma to conceptualize in a certain way (*tsogpay tengdu tokpay taktzam mayinpa*). We grasp to this object continually, but it does not exist, never did exist, and could not exist: it is like a full-sized, two-headed, purple elephant in our room.

དགག་བྱ།

gakja

ཚོགས་པའི་སྤྱིང་དུ་རྟོག་པས་བཏགས་ཅམ་མ་ཡིན་པ།

tsokpay tengdu tokpe taktzam mayinpa

11) State the famous lines from the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* which express the importance of understanding the object which we deny. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**One would never be able to
Grasp how something was
Devoid of being a thing
Without encountering that
Thing it was which one
Imagined it to be.**

།བཏགས་པའི་དངོས་ལ་མ་རིག་པར།

།དེ་ཡི་དངོས་མེད་འཇིན་མ་ཡིན།

takpay ngu la ma rekspar

de yi ngume dzin mayin



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Five

1) Give the Sanskrit and English names for the classical Indian treatise which forms the basis for the Buddhist art of reasoning and perceptual theory; list also its author and his approximate date. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**The Commentary on Valid Perception (*Pramana Varttika*, Tsema Namdrel)
of Master Dharmakirti (about 650 AD).**

ཚད་མ་རྣམ་འགྲེལ།

tsema namdrel

སློབ་དཔོན་ཚེས་ཀྱི་གྲགས་པ།

Lopon chukyi drakpa

2) Give the two expressions used to describe, respectively, disciples of poor intellectual and spiritual capacity, and disciples of high intellectual and spiritual capacity. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Disciples of poor intellectual and spiritual capacity are called "Those who follow because of their faith"

དབང་རྩལ་དད་པའི་རྗེས་འབྲང་།

wangtul depay jedrang

b) Disciples of high intellectual and spiritual capacity are called "Those who follow because of their reasoning"

དབང་རྣམ་རིགས་པའི་རྗེས་འབྲང་།

wangnun rikpay jedrang

3) State a negative reason why we should study the Buddhist art of reasoning, and then give a quotation from Lord Buddha himself to back up your statement. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

We should study the Buddhist art of reasoning because, with this knowledge, we will be able to avoid the grave karmic mistake of judging others on their appearances. As Lord Buddha has said,

**Only I, or someone like me, is able to judge another person.
No other person should ever judge another, for they will surely fall.**

ངའམ་ང་དང་འདྲ་བས་གང་ཟག་གི་ཚོད་བཟུང་གི་གང་ཟག་གིས་གང་ཟག་གི་
ཚོད་མི་བཟུང་སྟེ། ཉམས་པར་གྱུར་ཏེ།

*nga'am dang drawe gangsak gi tsu zung gi, gangsak gyi gangsak gyi tsu misung
te, nyampar gyur tare*

4) Give the definition of a reason. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The definition of a reason is: "Anything put forth as a reason."

རྟགས་སུ་བཀོད་པ། རྟགས་ཀྱི་མཚན་ཉིད།

tak su kupa, tak kyi tsennyi

5) Give the definition of a correct reason. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The definition of a correct reason is "A reason where the three relationships hold."

ཚུལ་གསུམ་ཡིན་པ། རྟགས་ཡང་དག་གི་མཚན་ཉིད།

tsulsum yinpa, tak yangdak gi tsennyi

6) Give the names of the three relationships that hold with a correct reason, and state them in a simplified manner for the logical statement, "Consider sound; it's a changing thing; because it's a thing which is made."

a) The relationship between the reason and the subject. In this proof it could be simply stated as, "Sound is a thing which is made."

ཕྱོགས་ཚོས། རྒྱ་བྱས་པ།

chok chu, dra jepa

b) The positive necessity between the reason and the quality to be proven. In this proof it could be simply stated as "If something is a thing which is made, it must be a changing thing."

རྗེས་སྲུབ། བྱས་ན་མི་རྟག་པས་སྲུབ།

je kyap, je na mitakpe kyap

c) The negative necessity between the reason and the quality to be proven. In this proof it could be simply stated as, "If something is not a changing thing, it cannot be a thing which is made."

ལྲོག་སྲུབ། རྟག་ན་མ་བྱས་པས་སྲུབ།

dok kyap, tak na ma jepe kyap

7) Name, define, and give one example each of the two most common categories into which all existing things are divided. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) Unchanging things, each of which are defined as "one object which is both a thing and which is not such that it only lasts for a moment"; classical examples would be empty space or emptiness.

རྟག་པ། ཚོས་དང་རྒྱད་ཅིག་མ་མ་ཡིན་པའི་གཞི་མཐུན་པ།

takpa, chu dang kechikma mayin payshi tunpa

ནམ་མཁའ། ལྗོང་པ་ཉིད།

namka, tongpa nyi

- b) Changing things, each of which are defined as "anything that lasts only for a moment"; classical examples would be a pillar or a water pitcher.

མི་རྟག་པ། རྐྱང་ཅིག་མ།

mitakpa, kechikma

ཀ་བ། བུམ་པ།

kawa, bumpa

- 8) Why is it often incorrect to translate the word *mitakpa* (Tibetan: *mi-rtag-pa*; Sanskrit: *anitya*) as "impermanent"?

The English word "impermanent," in its current usage, denotes something which is going to end, and not last forever; whereas "permanent" denotes something that will not end or break. The point of the Tibetan and Sanskrit words however is to denote something which changes from instant to instant: something fleeting or transitory. In fact, the definition of *mitakpa* is "something that only lasts for a moment."

Conversely, things which are *takpa* (the opposite of *mitakpa*) are not necessarily things that go on forever. The emptiness of a cup, for example, goes out of existence when the cup breaks, and came into existence when the cup was made, since it is simply the fact that the cup has no nature of its own. We *do not* though say that emptiness starts or stops, since this implies variability, and the point of things which are *mitakpa* is that they never change—their quality of being is perfectly constant and consistent: nothing is ever more or less than completely and purely empty of any nature of its own, for example.

We should note finally though that, in some of its usages, the word *mitakpa* is properly translated as impermanent, such as in the common lam-rim expression *chiwa mitakpa*: impermanence in the form of death.

- 9) Name, define, and give one classic example each of the three nominal divisions of "things that are general." (Tibetan track name and give example in Tibetan, but define in English.)

- a) A "general as far as types," otherwise known as a "quality." Defined as "that existing thing which subsumes the multiple things which are of its type." Classical example: "knowable things."

རིགས་ལྡི།

rik chi

ཤེས་བྱ།

sheja

- b) A "general as far as objects," otherwise known as an "actual mental image." The one for a water pitcher is defined as "that element which is imputed to be the water pitcher, but which is not: that thing which appears to be the water pitcher to the conceptual state of mind which is perceiving a water pitcher, but which is however not the water pitcher." Classical example: "The appearance, to the second instant of a conceptual state of mind which is perceiving a water pitcher, of the opposite of all that is not the water pitcher of the second instant."

དོན་ལྡིག་།

dun chi

བུམ་འཇོན་རྟོག་པ་སྐད་ཅིག་མ་གཉིས་པ་ལ་བུམ་པ་སྐད་ཅིག་གཉིས་པ་མ་
ཡིན་པ་ལས་ལོག་པར་སྒྲུང་བ་དེ་དེ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར།

*bumdzin tokpa kechikma nyipa la bumpa kechik nyipa mayinpa le lokpar
nangwa de de yinpay chir*

- c) A "general as far as a collection of parts." Defined as "a gross physical object which is composed of its multiple parts." Classic example: a water pitcher.

ཚོགས་ལྡིག་།

tsok chi

བུམ་པ།

bumpa

- 10) Why is the study of "quality and characteristic" vital for those who wish to see emptiness directly?

The study of a "general as far as types" and a "general as far as objects" allows us to understand that, when we perceive something, we do so actually by perceiving a mental object and mistaking it for the actual object. This mental object is forced upon us by our past karma. An actual object that existed independent of this process doesn't exist, and its absence is what emptiness is. By realizing directly how we perceive objects through mental images, we realize what the ultimate meaning of "dependent origination" is. This realization occurs during the final hours before seeing emptiness directly, at the "supreme object" stage of the part of preparation.



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Six

1) Give the definition of a negative thing. (Tibetan track in Tibetan, also giving the Tibetan word for "negative thing.")

The definition of a negative thing is: "A thing which must be perceived by the state of mind which perceives it directly through a process of eliminating, directly, that which it denies."

རང་དངོས་སུ་ཉེགས་པའི་སློབ་རང་གི་དགག་བྱ་དངོས་སུ་བཅད་ནས་ཉེགས་
དགོས་པའི་ཚོས།

rng ngu su tokpay lu rang gi gakja ngu su che ne tok gupay chu

2) Give the two kinds of negative things, and an example of each. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Things that are negative in the sense of not being something (*mayin gak*), and things that are negative in the sense of being the absence of something (*me gak*). An example of the first is the fact that sound is changing (implying that it is not unchanging). Examples of the second are space and emptiness.

མ་ཡིན་དགག།

mayin gak

མི་ཉེག་པ།

dra mitakpa

མིད་དགག།

me gak

ནམ་མཁའ།

namka

སྤོང་པ་ཉིད།

tongnyi

3) Name and give one example each of the two types of relationships. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) A relationship where to be one thing is to automatically be the other. An example would be a Chevy and cars, or else a water pitcher and the exclusion of all that is not a water pitcher.

བདག་གཅིག་གི་འབྲེལ་བ། བུམ་པ། བུམ་པའི་ལྗོན་པ།
dakchik gi drelwa bumpa bumpay dokpa

- b) A relationship where one thing came from another. An example would be a working thing in the moment after it, and the original working thing.

དེ་བྱུང་གི་འབྲེལ་བ།
dejung gi drelwa

དངོས་པོའི་ཕྱི་ལོགས་སུ་བྱུང་བ། དངོས་པོ།
ngupoy chilok su jungwa ngupo

4) Name the two types of correct reasons used to prove the absence of something. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) Correct reasons for the absence of something involving a thing which is imperceptible to the particular opponent.

མི་སྣང་བ་མ་དམིགས་པའི་རྟགས་ཡང་དག
minangwa mamikpay tak yangdak

- b) Correct reasons for the absence of something involving a thing which is perceptible to the particular opponent.

སྣང་རུང་མ་དམིགས་པའི་རྟགས་ཡང་དག
nangrung mamikpay tak yangdak

5) What is the ultimate application of such a reason?

To prove to ourselves that, just because we may not perceive a particular good quality in another person, it does not prove that they lack this good quality.

6) Name the three general types of incorrect logical statements for particular proofs, and give an example of each. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) **Contradictory reasons for a particular proof.**

དེ་སྐྱབ་ཀྱི་འགལ་བའི་གཏན་ཚིགས།
de drup kyi gelway tentsik

Example:

Consider sound.
It is not a changing thing,
Because it is a made thing.

སྒྲ་ཚོས་ཅན།
dra chuchen

མི་དྲག་པ་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ།
mitakpa mayin te

བྱས་པ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར།
jepa yinpay chir

b) **Indefinite reasons for a particular proof.**

དེ་སྐྱབ་ཀྱི་མ་ངེས་པའི་གཏན་ཚིགས།
dedrup kyi ma-ngepay tentsik

Example:

Consider sound.
It is something you can hear,
Because it is a changing thing.

སྒྲ་ཚོས་ཅན།
dra chuchen

མཉན་བྱ་ཡིན་སྟེ།
nyenja yin te

མི་དྲག་པའི་ཕྱིར།
mitakpay chir

c) Inaccurate reasons for a particular proof.

དེ་སྐྱབ་ཀྱི་མ་གྲུབ་པའི་གཏན་ཚིགས།

dedrup kyi madrupay tentsik

Example (one of seven):

Consider sound.
It is a changing thing,
Because it is sound.

སྒྲ་ཚོས་ཅན།

dra chuchen

མི་དྲག་སྟེ།

mitak te

སྒྲ་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར།

dra yinpay chir



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Seven

1) The Tibetan word *lojong* (*blo-sbyong*) has been translated into English as "mental training." State a reference by an eminent Lama to the famous *lojong* in eight verses which gives insight into another way of translating this word. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The first Changkya Rinpoche, Ngawang Lobsang Chunden, was a former life of Pabongka Rinpoche who lived 1642-1714, and who served as the Lama of the Emperor of China. He refers to the *lojong* (*blo-sbyong*) in eight verses as "advices in developing (*sbyong*) the mind (*sems* or *blo*) of enlightenment," or "the good heart."

སེམས་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་སྣང་རི་ཐང་པ་རྗེ་ཇི་སེང་གིས་མཛད་པའི་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་

སྣོང་གི་གདམས་པ་ཚིག་བརྒྱད་མར་གྲགས་པ།

*sempa chenpo langri tangpa dorje sengge dzepay jangchub semjong gi
dampa tsikgye mar drakpa*

2) In what sense are other living beings more precious than a gem that could give you anything you wished for?

We are generally incapable even of imagining the ultimate goal, so if we possessed a gem that gave us anything we wished for, we would not even be able to frame the wish properly.

3) Why does the third verse stress stopping mental afflictions at the very moment they begin?

Because of the fact that even a few instants of negative mental karma are enough to produce the perception of an entire lower-realm life, we must avoid even these.

4) If we continue to take the loss in any situation upon ourselves, and continue to give the advantage in any situation to others, what's to stop others from taking advantage of us?

First of all, our career is to be a bodhisattva; we are pledged to serve others as their servants, and to assure that all their wishes are fulfilled, even at our own expense. Secondly, any real suffering or want that we incur because we have given away what we have to others can only, in karmic terms, have been created by previous incidents *in which we failed to give to others what we had*. This does not however mean that we shouldn't keep others from harming ourselves or anyone else, because *this will hurt them in the future*.

5) What does the first Changkya Rinpoche have to say about *how* we should take the loss in any situation ourselves?

He says to make sure that we do it without regret, and with the highest joy.

6) When Gyalwa Yang Gunpa says that "your own mind is the Buddha," what does he actually mean?

The mind, in the sense of one's wisdom, has the capacity to take one to Buddhahood. The emptiness of our minds is our Buddha nature, our capacity to become enlightened: because the mind does not exist from its own side, we can one day be forced by our good karma to see it as the omniscient mind of a Buddha.

7) What does he mean when he says, "Nothing but the Dharma means anything at all; Throw the rest out like trash; It all boils down to dying..."?

Keeping in mind the fact that we must die, thinking that we will die today, enables us to keep our priorities straight, and divide between what is important to do and what is not: between what is Dharma and what is not.

8) What does it really mean when Gyalwa Yang Gunpa says, "The reality of things is beyond the mind; so reside in a state where you hold to nothing"?

He means that a normal state of mind perceiving apparent reality cannot perceive at the same time ultimate reality; and he urges us to stay in a state where we no longer hold anything to exist independent of our own projections, forced upon us by our past karma.

9) Who was the first person to openly teach the *lojong* known *Seven-Step Practice for Developing a Good Heart*? Remember to give his full name, and also his dates. (Tibetan track give his name and title of the text in Tibetan.)

It was the Kadampa geshe Chekawa (1101-1175).

བཀའ་གདམས་པ་དགོ་བཤེས་མཚན་ཁ་བ། ཡེ་ཤེས་རྗེ།
kadampa geshe chekawa, yeshe dorje

His name is also sometimes spelled:

འཚན་ཁ་བ། མཚན་ཁ་པ།
chekawa chekepa

The title in Tibetan is:

ལྷོ་ལྷོ་དོན་བདུན་མ།
lojong dun dunma

10) Why was this practice not taught openly for so many centuries?

Because people were not ready to accept the idea of exchanging their concern for fulfilling their own needs with a concern for fulfilling the needs of others, and might disrespect this idea if it was taught to them, thus collecting serious negative karma.

11) Geshe Chekawa says that "the brief essentials of the instruction are combined within five powers." Name these five powers, and explain them briefly. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and explain in English.)

The five powers:

ལྷོ་བས་ལྷ།
top nga

- a) resolutions for the future: when you wake up each day, do so with the decision that you will not waste this day, or this year, or this life, but rather you will devote your time to destroying the enemy of cherishing yourself

འཕན་པ།

penpa

- b) accustoming yourself: in all your activities of the day—whether you are walking somewhere or standing or sitting or sleeping—think of ways to increase and accustom yourself to the Wish for enlightenment

གོམས་པ།

gompa

- c) pure white seeds: engage in practices such as amassing great good karma and purifying yourself of negative karma, in order to increase the power of your Wish for enlightenment

དཀར་པོ་ས་བོན།

karmo sabun

- d) destruction: learn to bash the habit of cherishing yourself quickly on the head whenever it might arise

སུན་འབྲིན་པ།

sunjinpa

- e) prayer: pray, as you lay down to sleep at night, that all your goodness of the day might be dedicated to increasing the two forms of the Wish for enlightenment within your own mind

སྒྲོན་ལམ།

munlam

12) What were the words that Geshe Chekawa blurted out as he lay near death?

Obviously carrying out his own advice and performing the practice of transferring his consciousness (*powa*) in the tradition of the greater way, he yelled out: "I was praying that I could pass on to the lowest hell, for the sake of helping every living being! It's not working! I can't go! All I can see before me now is the paradise of enlightenment!"

ངས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་མནར་མེད་དུ་འགྲོ་བར་སློན་པར་བྱས་ཀྱང་།

མི་འགྲོ་བར་འདུག། །དག་ཞིང་གི་སྐྱང་བ་ཤར་བྱུང་།

nga semchen tamche kyi dondu narme du drowar munpar je kyang,
min-drowar duk, dakshing gi nangwa shar jung



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Eight

1) Name the author of the explanation that we will be reading for our study of "Freedom from the Four Attachments," and give his dates. Who was his nephew, and who was his nephew's nephew? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

The author of this explanation is Jetsun Drakpa Gyeltsen, who lived (1147-1216). His nephew was the Sakya Pandita, Kunga Gyeltsen (1182-1251), and the Sakya Pandita's nephew was Drogun Chugyal Pakpa (1235-1280), who brought Buddhism to the Mongolians.

ཇེ་བཙུན་བྲག་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

jetsun drakpa gyeltsen

ས་སྐྱ་པཌི་ཏ་ཀུན་དབའ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

sakya pandita kunga gyeltsen

འགོ་དགོན་ཚེས་རྒྱལ་འཕགས་པ།

drogun chugyal pakpa

2) Write the famous verse of "Freedom from the Four Attachments." (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

**A person who is still attached to this life is no Dharma practitioner.
A person who is still attached to the three worlds has no renunciation.
A person who is still attached to getting what they want is no bodhisattva.
A person who still grasps to things has no worldview.**

ཚེ་འདི་ལ་ཞེན་ན་ཚེས་པ་མིན།

ཁམས་གསུམ་ལ་ཞེན་ན་ངེས་འབྱུང་མིན།

བདག་དོན་ལ་ཞེན་ན་བྱང་སེམས་མིན།

འཇོན་པ་བྱུང་ན་ལྟ་བ་མིན།

*tсен di la shen na chupa min,
kam sum la shen na ngenjung min,
dak dun la shen na jangsem min,
dzinpa jung na tawa min,*

3) The holy lama Drakpa Gyeltsen describes "attachment to this life" as attachment to one's practice of the ethical life, and to one's learning, contemplation, and meditation. Explain the real meaning of attachment to one's practice of the ethical life.

It means to practice one's ethics out of attachment to one's instincts; to what feels good; to what one's parents or school teachers or religious instructors early in life said, without examining it; to what one's culture has ingrained one to think; to what one's peers say; to what is legal or not; rather than out of a well-reasoned understanding of emptiness and karma.

4) In discussing why one should not be attached to the three realms, the holy lama Drakpa Gyeltsen mentions the "pain of pain," and describes the sufferings of the three lower realms. Name these three realms, describe where they are, and explain how one takes birth in these realms. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan, then describe and explain in English.)

The three lower realms are the realms of animals, tormented spirits, and hell-beings. Ultimately these are located wherever the mind is located and is forced by one's own past karma to perceive them. One becomes a being in the lower realms *by perceiving the world as one of these beings*; to perceive the objects in one's world in the way that a dog perceives them *is what it is* to be a dog.

ངན་སོང་གསུམ།

ngensong sum

དུད་འགྲོ།

dundro

ཡི་དྲགས།

yidak

དབྱེལ་བ།

nyelwa

5) What reasoning can we use to decide whether the people and experiences from the earlier part of our life were somehow spiritually significant?

You can call this idea spiritual revisionism. From their own side, the events and people from the earlier part of our life have no nature of being spiritually significant or not. As we become more pure though, we begin to perceive them in a different way, as very special spiritually; which although not independently true, is nonetheless completely valid, as valid as the perception that they are just ordinary.

6) What state of mind is described in the *Wheel of Knives* as "the henchman of the devil"?

Grasping for yourself; which in one sense means working only for our own happiness, and in another sense means seeing ourselves as self-existent, as not being a product of our past karma, not being a project forced on us by what we have thought, spoken, or done in the past.

7) According to the text, each unpleasant thing or event that ever happens to us is a result of "what goes around comes around": the things we have done to others are returning back to us like a wheel of knives. In the blank next to each of the problems, write the letter of the real cause that the text says brought it about.

- e Those who are supposed to help me hurt me instead.
- g I find myself getting sick a lot.
- c I have different kinds of mental suffering.
- b People around me are bossy.
- a People say unpleasant things to me.
- m Unpleasant things often happen around me.
- l I have trouble finding friends and other people to help me.
- k People act in an intimidating way to me.
- d I feel depressed a lot.
- h Whatever I try to do never seems to work out.
- n No matter what I do, my Lama never seems to be pleased.
- j People seem to criticize everything I do.
- i The people around me can't seem to get along with each other.
- f I have had, or have, some very serious health problems.
- o I tend to get serious headaches or pains in my body.
- p I often feel anxiety or worry.
- r I don't have enough money.
- q I don't look very good physically.
- s I have trouble keeping my spiritual practice regularly and alertly.
- a) I engaged in divisive talk in the past.
- b) I was arrogant towards those less than me in the past.
- c) I upset other people in the past.
- d) In the past, I encouraged other people to do bad deeds.
- e) I failed to keep my mind on goodness in the past.
- f) I misused resources dedicated to the Dharma
- g) I did harm to the bodies of other people in the past.
- h) I hindered the work of holy beings in the past.
- i) In the past, I wished bad things on others, and split people into sides.
- j) In the past, I displayed a lack of personal conscience and consideration of what others would think of my actions.
- k) In the past, I said bad things about spiritual people.
- l) In the past, I split up other people who were close to each other.
- m) I failed to think of my world and the people in it as special and holy in the past.
- n) In the past I was insincere and hypocritical in my Dharma practice.
- o) I didn't keep my spiritual promises and pledges in the past.
- p) In the past I did wrong deeds against Angels and the secret teachings.
- q) In the past I was an angry person, and didn't make holy images with the proper care.
- r) In the past I failed to give things to others, and to make offerings to the Triple Gem.
- s) In the past I behaved improperly towards the Dharma.

8) Suppose that we identify the kind of karma from our past that is bringing us the worst problem in our mind or in our life in general. Are we necessarily doing that same kind of karma now? What can we do about it?

If for example we live in a place where there are lots of unpleasant smells and pollution, this is because we committed sexual misconduct in the past. We may or may not still have a problem with this kind of behavior now, because of the time lapse between a deed and its consequence. Nonetheless, one way to quickly stop most of the effect of this karma is to be *extremely careful* about doing even the smallest form of the same deed in our current daily life.

9) Suppose we like another person but can't be close to them because of some third person who is always close to them. Discuss the difference between the "how" versus the "why" in this situation, and the apparent solution versus the real solution.

The "how" in this situation is that the other person doesn't physically give us a chance to be near the person we want to be near to. But the reason *why* this is happening in the first place is that we in the past didn't let someone else get near someone they wanted to be close to. The apparent solution to the problem is to try to get rid of the other person somehow, which will always "backfire" or cause the wheel of knives to turn back on us. The real solution is to make very sure that we have no negative feelings toward the person, and that we be very careful to see that other people can be near the people they want to be near.

10) Halfway through the *lojong* or text on developing the good heart entitled *Crown of Knives*, the author—master Dharma Rakshita—says that he has "finally realized just who my enemy is." Who is this great enemy? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

He is both the tendency of self-cherishing and its immediate cause: the habit of grasping to oneself as being self-existent, or having some nature of your own independent of your projections forced upon you by your past karma.

རང་གཅིས་འཇིན།

rang chen dzin

བདག་འཇིན།

dakdzin

11) In slaying his newly recognized enemy, master Dharma Rakshita uses the wheel of knives now to cut the foe's own head. Explain just how this is done.

The wheel of knives is the law of karma, the fact that what we do comes back to us. During our lives in samsara or the vicious circle of suffering, we react to negative things with negative actions, which again bring negative things to us, to be reacted to negatively, and thus we perpetuate pain. But the same principle can be used in reverse; we use method (bodhisattva activities such as giving and patience) and wisdom (an understanding of emptiness to accompany these activities) to collect, instead of karma, the two "collections" of merit and wisdom, which create the body and mind of an enlightened being.

12) The text says that for our whole lives we are constantly mistaking a reflection of the moon in our teacup for the real moon itself. This is supposed to prove that we should do the good deeds we should, and not do the bad things that we shouldn't. What's the connection?

The fact that certain circumstances have come together, like a little smooth patch of water in our teacup and the shining of the moon, and that this has created the appearance of the moon in the cup, is applicable to all other objects, which are created by the coming together of my own projections and the raw data on which they appear.



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Nine

1) Give the title of the primary text we will be reading for our study of the art of interpretation; name its author, and give his dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

Our study will be based on the *Essence of Eloquence, on the Art of Interpretation*, written by Je Tsongkapa (1357-1419).

དྲང་ངེས་ལེགས་བཤད་སྣང་པོ།

drange lekshe nyingpo

ཇེ་ཙོང་ཁ་པ།

je tsongkapa

2) Nowadays some people say that a knowledge of emptiness is not the main point of Buddhism, while others say that emptiness is something known only intuitively, and not from a foundation of determined, organized study. Describe a quotation by Lord Buddha himself that disproves these ideas.

Je Tsongkapa himself gives a quotation from the *Sutra Requested by the Realized Being Rashtrapala* which says that "beings must wander here" in suffering life "because they have no knowledge of the ways of emptiness," and that "those with compassion" (meaning the Buddhas and others) "use skillful means and millions of different reasonings to bring them into it."

3) Why do we have to learn to distinguish between the literal and figurative; why do we have to learn to interpret what the Buddha said, in order to find out what he really meant?

This is primarily to learn the true meaning of emptiness, which was described in the three different turnings of the wheel of the Dharma in apparently contradictory terms by Lord Buddha himself.

4) Describe three different levels of the terms "literal" and "figurative."

- a) **On the level of expression: do the words a person speaks and their intended meaning match each other (literal), or not (figurative)?**
- b) **On the level of reality: do the way which an object appears to be and the way the object is match each other (literal), or not (figurative)?**
- c) **On the level of understanding: do we understand the two realities with an accurate state of perception (*tsad-ma* or *pramana*) that sees what they are (literal), or do we understand them with only an approximate understanding (*yid-dpyod*) that only has a rough understanding of what they are (figurative)?**

5) Je Tsongkapa points out that—if what the Buddha said must be divided into what he said that was figurative and what he said that was literal—then the Buddha's own statements about when he was being figurative and when he was being literal cannot necessarily be taken literally. Rather, we must in the end rely on what is logical and makes sense to us. Describe the three logical tests recommended by Lord Buddha, and state the source for them.

Lord Buddha advises us to accept his words only after we've finished a careful examination of them, testing them like gold—in the fire, by cutting, and by using a touchstone. These three tests refer, respectively, to checking whether the particular statement or belief in question contradicts our own direct, accurate experience; our own deductive, accurate perceptions; or the words of a being whom we have established correctly as being infallible.

6) If many of the beliefs of schools like the Mind-Only are actually wrong, then why is it so important for us to study them carefully?

Lord Buddha taught the various schools of ancient India for the very reason that their beliefs were helpful in bringing people of various capacities and personalities further along the Buddhist path. Many beliefs of the Mind-Only school, although technically incorrect, nonetheless function to help get us thinking clearly about emptiness, and the idea of the world and its inhabitants being a projection of our minds.

7) How can the principle of "figurative and literal" be useful to us in our daily lives?

We can come to a better understanding that—if the Buddha himself spoke figuratively when it was helpful to students to do so—then we must be very careful in judging the people around us, who could well be special beings who are trying to bring us and others further along in our thinking.

8) In his answer to the bodhisattva in the *Commentary on the True Intent of the Sutras*, Lord Buddha states that he was referring to three different lacks of things when he said that no existing object at all had any nature of its own. Name these three. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a) A lack of any definitive nature

མཚན་ཉིད་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་པ།

tsennyi ngowo nyi mepa

b) A lack of any nature of growing

སྐྱེ་བ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་པ།

kyewa ngowo nyi mepa

c) A lack of any nature of being ultimate

དོན་དམ་པ་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་པ།

dundampa ngowo nyi mepa

9) Name the famous three attributes which form the cornerstone of the beliefs of the Mind-Only School, and which relate to the three different lacks of things mentioned in question one. After naming them, describe them briefly. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) **Constructs.** The creations of words or mental images through which we perceive the world; these creations can correspond to existing or to non-existing things.

གུན་བརྟགས།

kuntak

- b) **Dependent things.** Changing things, which come from causes and conditions.

གཞན་དབང་།

shenwang

- c) **Totality, meaning emptiness.** The lack of self-existence (a particular non-existing form of constructs) that applies to all objects, especially to dependent things.

ཡོངས་གྲུབ།

yongdrup

10) Give finally an illustration for each of these three lacks of a self-nature, or attributes. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

- a) **Constructs are like a flower that grows in mid-air.** (Not that it doesn't exist by the way, only that it is only imaginary or an object in the mind.)

གུན་བརྟགས་ནམ་མཁའི་མི་ཏོག་དང་འདྲ།

kuntak namkay metok dang dra

- b) **Dependent things are like a magic show; it doesn't appear to us that a pot and our perception of the pot are "of the same substance" in the sense of growing from the same karmic seed, but they are, so there is the sense of an illusion.**

གཞན་དབང་སྐྱེ་མ་དང་འདྲ།
shenwang gyuma dang dra

- c) **Totality is like empty space, a simple lack of physical matter, in the sense of being the simple lack of a non-existent self-nature.**

ཡོངས་གྲུབ་ནམ་མཁའ་དང་འདྲ།
yongdrup namka dang dra

11) Name the three famous turnings of the wheel of the Dharma, the three great convocations, and state (a) when they were primarily taught; (b) where they were primarily taught; (c) for whom they were primarily taught; (d) their basic subject matter; and (e) what, from the point of view of the "outcome of the exchange," their view was on whether things have their own nature or not. (Tibetan track all in Tibetan!)

- (1) **First turning of the wheel of the Dharma—**

Name: The Turning of the Wheel on the Four Truths

བདེན་བཞིའི་ཚོས་འཁོར།
denshiy chunkor

Place: Sarnath, near Varanasi

ཕྱ་ར་ཏུ་སི
varanasi

Disciples: Those of the lower way

ཉན་ཐོས་ཐེག་པ།

nyentu tekpa

Basic subject matter: The four realized truths

འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི།

pakpay denpa shi

View: Every existing thing exists by definition

ཚོས་རྣམས་རང་གི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་གྲུབ་པ།

chunam ranggi tsennyi kyi druppa

(2) Second turning of the wheel of the Dharma—

Name: The Turning of the Wheel on How Nothing Exists by Definition

མཚན་ཉིད་མེད་པའི་ཚོས་འཁོར།

tsennyi mepay chunkor

Place: Vulture's Peak, in Rajagirha

གུ་ཤོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

jagu pungpoy ri

Disciples: Those of the greater way

ཐེག་ཆེན།

tekchen

Basic subject matter: Emptiness

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

tongpa nyi

View: No existing thing exists by definition

ཚོས་རྣམས་རང་གི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་མ་གྲུབ་པ།

chunam ranggi tsennyi kyi ma druppa

(3) Third turning of the wheel of the Dharma—

Name: The Turning of the Wheel on Fine Distinctions

ལེགས་ཕྱིའི་ཚོས་འཁོར།

lekchey chunkor

Place: Vaishali

ཡངས་པ་ཅན།

yangpachen

Disciples: Those of all ways

སྟེག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད།

tekpa tamche

Basic subject matter: The three attributes

མཚན་ཉིད་གསུམ།

tsennyi sum

View: Some things exist by definition, and some do not, and we must make fine distinctions between them

ཚོས་རྣམས་ལ་རང་གི་མཚན་ཉིད་གྲིས་གྲུབ་མ་གྲུབ་ལེགས་པར་བྱེ།

chu nam la ranggi tsennyi kyi drup madrup lekpar che

12) According to the Mind-Only School, which of these three turnings of the wheel (also called "groups of sutra") were spoken literally, and which are figurative, or something we must interpret further? According to the Middle-Way School, which are to be taken on face value, and which are not? Why so, in each case?

a) **Mind-Only School:** The first two are figurative, and the last one literal, because it is neither true that all things exist by definition, nor that nothing exists by definition; some are one and some are the other, and the only literal teaching is the one (the third turning of the wheel) where Lord Buddha made these distinctions.

b) **Middle-Way School:** The first and the last are not to be taken on face value, but the middle one is, because it is true that nothing exists by definition (as stated in the middle one), and not true that everything exists by definition (as stated in the first) or that some things do and some things do not exist by definition (as stated in the last). But remember that, in this school, "literal" means any teaching in which Lord Buddha referred clearly to emptiness; and "figurative" means any teaching in which he did not.

13) What, in the context of this reading, is the real criterion that decides whether a person belongs to the "lower way" (Hinayana) or the "higher way" (Mahayana)?

The question is whether or not their views on emptiness belong to the lower two ancient schools of India (the Abhidharma or Higher-Knowledge School and the Sutrists or logic and perceptual-theory school) or the higher two schools (Mind-Only and Middle-Way).



COURSE XVIII

The Great Ideas of Buddhism, Part Three

Answer Key, Class Ten

1) When we refer to the first turning of the wheel as something which is either figurative or literal, are we speaking about any teaching that Lord Buddha gave during the initial period of his teaching career? Give an example to explain why or why not. (Tibetan track answer in English and give the example in Tibetan.)

We are not talking about any teaching that Lord Buddha gave during the initial period of his teaching career, because there are teachings that he gave during this time that we do not have to examine as to their true meaning. An example would be his advice to the Group of Five at Varanasi urging them to "be sure to wear your lower robes in a neat circle."

ལྷ་སྡེ་ལ་ཤམ་ཐབས་རྒྱམ་པོར་བགོ་བར་བྱའོ། །ཞེས།

nga dela shamtab lumpor gowar jao, shey

2) Je Tsongkapa takes pains to disprove the idea of some Tibetan thinkers that all three turnings of the wheel were meant literally. These thinkers would even say that Lord Buddha was speaking literally when he said (actually in order to attract some non-Buddhist groups) that things do have some kind of self-nature. What object do they say that Lord Buddha was referring to, and how is this object sometimes misinterpreted? (Tibetan track name the object in Tibetan and explain the misinterpretation in English.)

These thinkers believe that Lord Buddha was referring to the "essence of the Ones who have Gone That Way," or the Buddha nature that each being possesses. This is actually primarily the emptiness of our minds, which provides the potential for us to see our minds one day as enlightened. This nature or potential is frequently misinterpreted as referring to some Buddha within us that somehow already exists, and which we must simply reveal. From here it is easy to go on to the error of believing that we do have some self-existent self-nature.

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་སྣང་པོ།

deshin shekpay nyingpo

3) What, according to the Middle-Way School, is "the ultimate" (also called "ultimate truth" or "ultimate reality")? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

They say that "the ultimate" or "ultimate truth" refers to emptiness, which is described as the fact that no existing object has a self-nature.

ཚུམ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་མེད་པ་ནི་དོན་དམ་བདེན་པ་ཡིན།

chu tamche kyi ngowonyi mepa ni dundam denpa yin

4) How does the Middle-Way School describe deceptive reality? (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and describe in English.)

They say that deceptive reality is that reality which deceives a certain state of mind (which is itself called "the deceived"). This reality is called "deceptive" because it seems to be one way (self-existent) but is really something else (a projection forced on us by our karma).

ཀུན་རྫོབ་བདེན་པ།

kundzob denpa

ཀུན་རྫོབ།

kundzob

5) Now how does the Mind-Only School draw the difference between "ultimate reality" and "deceptive reality"?

They say that anything which exists by definition (meaning dependent things and totality) is an example of ultimate reality. They say that anything that doesn't exist by definition (meaning constructs) is an example of deceptive reality.

6) What does the Mind-Only School mean when they say that the valid perception which is the subject that perceives a physical object, and the physical object which it perceives, are "of the same substance"? (Tibetan track also give the Tibetan for this concept.)

They do *not* mean that the physical object is made of the same stuff as the mind; rather, they mean that the subject and the object have grown from a single karmic seed.

གཟུགས་དང་གཟུགས་འཛིན་གྱི་ཚད་མ་རྗེས་གཞན་གྱིས་སྣོང་པ།

suk dang sukdzin gyi tsema dzeshen gyi tongpa

7) Explain where the name of the Mind-Only School comes from.

As Je Tsongkapa explains this point in his *Illumination of the True Thought*. He first quotes the *Sutra of the Tenth Level*, which says that "these three realms of existence are mind only." He goes on to explain that the real meaning of "mind only" here is that "the mind is the main thing" that creates the world, and not something physical, or some creator god. He says that the expression "mind only" is therefore only an abbreviation for the expression "mind alone is the main thing." The way that the mind creates the world is by causing us to collect karma; the point is not that we just make up the world with our mind.

8) In the Independent group of the Middle-Way School, what does it mean to say that a thing "exists truly"? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

In this school, an object exists truly when it exists from its own side through some unique identity of its own, rather than simply being established as existing by having appeared to an unaffected state of mind. Objects like this don't exist, and this is the ultimate meaning of "emptiness."

སྣོ་གཞི་དམེད་ལ་སྣང་བའི་དབང་གིས་བཞག་པ་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཡུལ་རང་གི་སྣོན་

མོང་མ་ཡིན་པའི་བསྣོད་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ངོས་ནས་བྱུང་པ།

lo nume la nangway wang gi shakpa mayinpar yul rang gi tunmong ma yinpay du luk kyi ngu ne druppa

9) When three different types of being look at the same object, they see three different objects. Are each of them having a valid perception, or not?

They are all having a valid perception, given their karmic circumstances.

10) The Mind-Only School has asserted that there are things that can exist from their own side, through some unique identity of their own. The Independent part of the Middle-Way School has asserted that the perception of things depends on their appearing from their own side to a state of mind which, from its side, is unerring. How does the Consequence part of the Middle-Way School assert that things exist? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

They say that things exist only as projections, from our side.

རྟོག་པས་ཕར་བཏགས་ཙམ།

tokpe par taktsam

11) What does Je Tsongkapa say his own position in this regard is? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

At the end of his text on the art of interpretation, he openly declares that he follows the teaching of the Consequence group of the Middle-Way School: "Who on earth who understood these things would fail to take the system of the realized being Nagarjuna as their own?"

ལྷུ་ལྷན་ལུགས་བཟང་གཙོ་བོར་མི་འཇིན་སུ།

ludrup luksang tsowor mindzin su

12) When we say that things are only projections, does that mean that we can make anything anything we want it to be?

No it does not, because we only have projections as they are forced upon us by our karma.

13) Does the fact that things are only projections mean that leading an ethical way of life is unimportant?

No, it becomes more important, because our projections are forced on us by our past deeds, good or bad. Someone who really understands emptiness immediately understands that it is absolutely essential to lead an ethical life.

14) Why does the Consequence presentation of the meaning of emptiness have especially important implications for our own search for enlightenment?

Given that things are creations of our projections forced on us by our past karma, then we can—by leading an extraordinarily virtuous way of life—actually put an end to the projections of aging and death, become a tantric angel, and enter a tantric paradise in this very life.

15) The *Heart Sutra* says that the real goal of Buddhism is to "stop the process of aging and death" through "stopping our ignorance." Is this a literal or a figurative statement? If it is literal, then why have we not seen any person who stopped the process of aging and death?

It is literal, and we have not seen these people because we are like the human who sees the cup of liquid as water: we do not yet have sufficient good karma to see someone else achieving this goal.