



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.)

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

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

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.)

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

*Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, alternating days, on patience and joyful effort
Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):*



Name:

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Homework, 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?

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

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?

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

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.)

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.)

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."

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?

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.)

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.)

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, watching your own meditation, and determining whether or not you are attacked by the five obstacles mentioned by Arya Nagarjuna.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, Class Three

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

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

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)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

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

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

a)

b)

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

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)

b)

c)

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?

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

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

a)

b)

c)

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

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, reviewing each of the six steps of the process outlined by Lord Maitreya to explain how our suffering begins.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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.)

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.)

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)

b)

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

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

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

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

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

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.)

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.)

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, trying to identify the imaginary object that emptiness is empty of.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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)

b)

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.)

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

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

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)

b)

c)

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)

b)

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

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)

b)

c)

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

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, trying to identify a mental image or "quality" in your mind that you are actually watching when you think you are observing an outside object.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:
Date:
Grade:

Homework, Class Six

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

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

a)

b)

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

a)

b)

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

a)

b)

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

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

a)

b)

c)

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation on the process of how the mind perceives a negative thing; and then practice bringing to mind the object we deny when we speak of "emptiness"; followed by thinking about how this object doesn't even exist.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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

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

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?

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

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

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...?"

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"?

9) Who was the first person to openly teach the *lojong* known as the *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.)

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

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.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

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

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, reviewing the five powers and how you can apply them to your day today.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:
Date:
Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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

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.

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.)

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

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

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.

___Those who are supposed to help me hurt me instead.

___I find myself getting sick a lot.

___I have different kinds of mental suffering.

___People around me are bossy.

___People say unpleasant things to me.

___Unpleasant things often happen around me.

___I have trouble finding friends and other people to help me.

___People act in an intimidating way to me.

___I feel depressed a lot.

___Whatever I try to do never seems to work out.

___No matter what I do, my Lama never seems to be pleased.

___People seem to criticize everything I do.

___The people around me can't seem to get along with each other.

___I have had, or have, some very serious health problems.

___I tend to get serious headaches or pains in my body.

___I often feel anxiety or worry.

___I don't have enough money.

___I don't look very good physically.

___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?

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.

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.)

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.

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?

*Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, examining the three or four most serious problems in your life, and checking mentally the list of their karmic causes from the list found in the *Crown of Knives*.*

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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.

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?

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

a)

b)

c)

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.

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?

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

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)

b)

c)

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)

b)

c)

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

a)

b)

c)

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:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

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

Name:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

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

Name:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

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)

b)

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)?

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, examining concepts of Buddhism or actions of Lamas and the like with which you have trouble, to decide whether they are to be taken literally or figuratively, and whether they may have some benefit, in the way that the lower schools' versions of selflessness or emptiness do.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, 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.)

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.)

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

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

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

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

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

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?

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.)

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

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

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

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

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?

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day, analytical meditation on whether or not you really believe in these lines from the *Heart Sutra*, and whether or not you are doing everything you can to make them come true in your own life.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):