



The Asian Classics Institute



Diamond Mountain University

In-Depth Course 1
Teachings of the Future Buddha:
The Uttara Tantra of Maitreya

Homework, Class Eight: Other Schools on Buddha Nature

1) Describe how the Detailists—the Abhidharma School—explain Buddha-nature, and why. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks give the description in these languages.)

2) State how the Mind-Only School describes Buddha-nature, and then how they distinguish between the two classical types of Buddha-nature. (S, T for description of Buddha-nature.)

3) List the two principal works that we will use for our presentation of the idea of Buddha-nature according to the Tibetan school of “other-emptiness” (*shentong*); also name the two authors, and their dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

(a)

(b)

(please see the back)

4) According to Jamgon Kongtrul, there are three great Tibetan fathers of the other-emptiness traditions. Name them and give their dates.

(a)

(b)

(c)

5) The Tibetan school of “other-emptiness” is tied to the Jonangpa tradition. Explain the name “Jonangpa” and relate a little about the history of this lineage.

6) Give an explanation of what the “other” (*shen*) in the expression “other-emptiness” (*shentong*) means.

7) How does the idea of “other-emptiness” (*shentong*) relate to the Buddha-nature which is the subject of our class?

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8) How does Jonangpa himself (Master Sherab Gyeltsen) describe the two kinds of Buddha-nature?

9) The members of the Jonangpa School differentiate between “great” followers of the Middle Way (Madhyamika) and “regular” followers of the Middle Way, grouping these last together with followers of the three lower schools of classical Indian Buddhism: the Detailists (Abhidharma schools); Sutrists (logic schools); and Yogists (Mind-Only School). Explain how they draw the distinction between their own “great” version of the Middle Way, and the “regular” Middle Way and other groups.

10) Give four criticisms of the “other-emptiness” and Jonangpa ideas of Buddha-nature mentioned by Gyaltsab Je in his explanation of *The Commentary on the Latter Part (Uttara Tantra)*.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(please see the back)

11) A beautiful concept in the structure of Jamgon Kongtrul's *Diamond Moon* is that this Lama first discusses the *idea* of Buddha-nature, and after that presents a series of actual *practices* which one can follow to realize this nature. Summarize his final advice for practice.

12) On the very first page of his *Diamond Moon*, Jamgon Kongtrul gives us a clue as to why a high Lama might take an untenable position concerning emptiness and Buddha-nature. What does He say?

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes a day, analytical meditation considering the difference between seeing Buddha-nature as something positive—a seed in the mind; and something negative—the lack of a self-existent object.