



The Asian Classics Institute



Diamond Mountain University

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

Homework and Quiz Master, Class Nine: In the End, All Paths Are One

1) Name the three ways or vehicles that relate to the discussion in *The Latter Part* about there being, in the end, one way. Also explain the names of these three ways. (Tibetan and Sanskrit tracks add those languages.)

(a) [The way of the listeners (also known as “those who listen and proclaim the teachings”), so called because the followers of this way listen to the teachings of the greater way, and even share them with others, but are not inclined to practice them.

ཉམ་ཐོས་གྱི་ཐེག་པ།

nyentu kyi tekpa

श्रावकयान

s'ra-vakaya-na

“those who listen and proclaim”:

ཐོས་སྒྲུབ།

tudruk

(b) [The way of the self-made buddhas. They are given the name because, after millions of lifetimes of study with Masters, they are able to gain realizations working on their own. One older sutra reference seems to imply that they are called self-made (Skt: *pratyeka*) because they utilize direct perceptions (*pratyaksha*) of emptiness to achieve their goals.

རང་རྒྱལ།

ranggyal

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

rang sanggye

प्रत्येक बुद्ध यान

pratyeka buddha ya-na

(c) [The greater way. The way of the bodhisattvas, whose scope covers every living being.

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

tekpa chenpo

महायान

maha-ya-na

2) Explain the difference in motivation, and thus the goals, of followers of the three ways.

[Followers of the first two ways—those of the listeners and the self-made buddhas—correspond in motivation to practitioners of medium scope in the teachings on the steps of the path (lam-rim). That is, they seek to eliminate their mental afflictions, become enemy destroyers (arhats), and thus gain their own nirvana and freedom from suffering life altogether. Those of the greater way seek to become a fully enlightened Buddha, in order to save all beings from all forms of pain.]

3) Explain the difference in core teachings used by followers of the three ways.

[Followers of the listener way utilize primarily the teachings on the four arya truths. Those of the way of the self-made buddhas utilize the teaching on the twelve links of dependent origination. Those of the greater way utilize teachings of the greater way, such as the perfection of wisdom sutras and, especially in certain schools, the sutras relating to the third turning of the wheel.]

*4) Explain the difference, especially from the point of view of the Mind-Only and Independent Middle-Way Schools, between the kind of emptiness perceived by followers of each of the three ways. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks give the general names for the two and three types of emptiness, respectively; Tibetan track also add brief description of each of the three.)

(a) Those of the listener way perceive the subtle lack of self-existence to a person. This is described as the lack of a person who is self-standing and substantial, in the sense of being an independent controller of their own mind and body.

གང་ཟག་གི་བདག་མེད་ལྔ་མོ།

gangsak gi dakme tramo

पुद्गलनैरात्म्य

pudgalanaira-tmya

གང་ཟག་རང་རྐྱེན་ལ་རྣམ་པོན་གྱིས་སྣོད་བ།

gangsak rangkya tuppa dzeyu kyi tongwa

(b) Those of the way of the self-made buddhas perceive the gross lack of self-existence to phenomena. This is described as the lack of visible form and a perceiver of this form which come from a separate substance, or seed.

ཚོས་གྱི་བདག་མེད་རགས་པ།

chukyi dakme rakpa

धर्मनैरात्म्य

dharmanaira-tmya

གཟུགས་དང་གཟུགས་འཛིན་གྱི་ཚད་མ་རྫས་གཞན་གྱིས་སྟོང་བ།

suk dang sukdzin gyi tsema dzeshin gyi tongwa

(c) Those of the greater way perceive the subtle lack of self-existence to phenomena. This is described by the lower middle-way school as the lack of any object that is not established merely by its appearing to an unimpaired state of mind, but which rather exists from its own side, through some unique way of being of its own.

ཚོས་གྱི་བདག་མེད་སྤྲམ་མོ།

chukyi dakme tramo

གློ་གཞོན་མེད་ལ་སྐྱང་བའི་དབང་གིས་བཞག་ཅམ་མ་ཡིན་པར་ཡུལ་རང་གི་སྤུན་མོང་མ་ཡིན་པའི་

lonu mela nangway wanggi shaktsam mayinpar yul ranggi tunmong mayinpay

སྟོན་ལུགས་སུ་གྲུབ་པས་སྟོང་བ།

duluk su druppay tongwa

*5) Why do members of the Mind-Only School, especially those who “follow after scripture,” believe that—in the end—there are three different ways?

[They quote various sutras that refer to these ways. One is *The Sutra on the Journey to Langka*, which lists the three ways, as well as two others. Another source is *The True Intent of the Sutras*, which says that those of the two lower ways could never develop the wish for enlightenment (bodhichitta), because they have too little compassion; are too afraid of the sufferings of the circle of suffering; and are by nature of a lower type. And finally they quote the *Mother Sutras*, which state that practitioners of this type cannot develop bodhichitta because “they have already cut off the stream of cyclic existence.”]

*6) What, according to Gyaltsab Je, is the real reason why those of the Mind-Only School might believe that, in the end, there are three ways?

[He says that they believe this ultimately because they follow *The True Intent of the Sutras*, and thus hold that dependent things and totality exist ultimately. This makes them then believe that suffering beings have three different types of truly-existing Buddha-natures; and three types of truly-existing wishes; and expect three types of truly-

existing goals. They thus hold that there are suffering beings who will not be able to achieve full enlightenment.]

7) There is a story for explaining why Lord Buddha would say that there are three vehicles, when in the end of ends there is only one. Relate the story.

[Choney Lama Drakpa Shedrup (1675-1748) relates the ancient scriptural story of the ship captain of skillful means who sees that his passengers are exhausted and about to give up the journey, and so in order to encourage them he emanates a beautiful city on an isle, which enables everyone to carry on until they reach the jewel island. Just so, there are travels using lower paths who are exhausted by them—especially those of the Mind-Only School, and Lord Buddha leads them on by guiding them to a lower nirvana.]

*8) The debate over how many ways in the end there are, like all of Lord Buddha's teachings, has application to our modern life. Describe this application, and state two considerations that we will want to keep in mind.

[The fact that Lord Buddha himself would undertake to define two entire systems of practice that are, in the end, only steps to a higher system is a clear message that we can and should utilize many different ways of presenting ourselves and the teachings in order to attract people to what will be of ultimate benefit. In order for this to be effective, we must first have a strong foundation and a clear perception of what *is* of ultimate benefit. And then we must be creative and dedicated in finding skillful means to reach others, remembering that we are actually saving people from both temporary and ultimate suffering.]

9) Suppose a practitioner is attracted to one of the two lower ways or vehicles, and uses it successfully to reach a lower nirvana. *The Latter Part* says that in the end all paths lead to one; how then does a person like this move up to the one path?

[Some people have asserted that someone who has already reached a lower nirvana enters the greater way at the seventh bodhisattva level, since they have by definition then already ended their mental afflictions. Choney Lama though says that they enter through the first of the five paths on the mahayana track—the path of accumulation—in order to collect massive amounts of good karma in this and the following paths, as a bodhisattva.

He says that if these lower enemy destroyers could go straight to the seventh bodhisattva level then everyone should go first to the lower nirvana, since in cases of great effort this can be accomplished in only three lifetimes, whereas it takes many millions of eons to work up through the bodhisattva levels to the seventh.]

10) The question of whether all paths lead into one brings up the larger issue of what the final end of the paths is like; which in turn raises the question of how it all began. Choney Lama quotes a metaphor to describe the end and beginning of the cycle of suffering—describe this metaphor.

[The verse quoted by Choney Lama states first that we cannot see the beginnings of physical seeds: we look at a pumpkin seed and know it came from the previous generation of seeds, but we cannot pinpoint a first seed. The cycle of suffering is the same. We can though see the end of a series of generations of seed, when we burn a seed, and know it will never create another generation. This too is the nature of our suffering, which logically will one day end because it is based on a relatively unstable and completely incorrect notion that things are coming from their own side.]

Debate assignment: Remember to review this class at least once before the next class, by sitting down with a friend over a cup of coffee or tea and simply discussing what was said.

Meditation assignment: Sit down for 15 minutes a day and do an analytical meditation about the worldview of karma, emptiness, and compassion, along with different skillful means in which you might present this worldview to more people, as Lord Buddha did with the presentation of “lower” ways.