



Name:
Date:
Grade:

Sacred Classics Translator Program – Spring Term, 2005

Answer Key, Homework, Class 1

1) We are at the part of *Uma Chi Dun* where Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye begins his commentary upon the opening obeisance of Master Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way*. To whom or to what does Master Chandrakirti bow down? Why?

In contrast to the more traditional opening homages of Buddhist books, Master Chandrakirti does not bow down to a holy being but to compassion itself - because compassion is the primal cause of enlightenment. Specifically, it leads to the development of the Wish for enlightenment and the wisdom perceives emptiness which together are the causes for enlightened beings. So rather than bowing down to specific holy beings, Master Chandrakirti is bowing down to the state of mind that is the source or the seed that gives rise to all holy beings and to all higher spiritual qualities.

2) Master Chandrakirti's opening homage refers to living beings who helplessly circle round like on a water wheel. What is the Tibetan word for water wheel (or water mill)? And what is its meaning as a metaphor here?

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(ZO CHUN 'PHYAN - transliteration)

(so chun chen - pronunciation)

The water wheel represents the suffering condition of samsaric existence in which one uncontrollably takes rebirth after rebirth, and in which sooner or later one is 'dumped' into the lower realms of existence.

3) How does Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye define great compassion for the reader? How does this differ from another flavor (non-Mahayana) of great compassion?

Kedrup Tenpa Dargye defines great compassion as the desire to protect living beings from anything that would harm them. This is in contrast to the flavor of great compassion shared with practitioner of the Hinayana which is the wish that all beings could be free from suffering (without a sense of personal responsibility for saving living beings from their suffering).

4) How many beats per line did the Tibetan translators employ in their translation of the two verses of Master Chandrakirti's opening homage that are quoted in *Uma Chi Dun*? What lesson and precedent does this offer for us as trainee Western translators?

The Tibetan translators, always with the help of a Indian translator, translated the first homage verse with nine beats (or syllables) per line, and with eleven beats per line in the second verse of homage. It may be that the original Sanskrit of Master Chandrakirti maintained an uniform number of beats in both these verses. However, the translators into Tibetan presumably required additional words to translate the second verse of the homage adequately. As trainee translators, we should understand this as a teaching and precedent to extend the meter of our translations into English as required to accurately convey the meaning of the verse.

5) We noted that in his opening homage Master Chandrakirti referred to "mid-level Buddhas" and that Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye subsequently referred to them as "self-made Buddhas" without commenting on the connection (at least at this stage). As translators, should we always add an endnote to assist the reader in such a situation?

Where a word in the original is vague or could be misconstrued one should consider whether it would be more effective to leave the possible ambiguity unresolved. Often an author is setting up the reader and will resolve the issue later in the text. If we make an endnote and explain the issue then we are 'jumping the gun' and defeating the author's own purpose in deliberately provoking some issue in the reader's mind so the reader will think about it before being given an answer.

Here, Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye is beginning to raise the meaning of a 'mid-level Buddha' and a 'self-made Buddha', and he will comment more upon these terms later in his text. So we should leave it as is in our translation without any commentary.

