



Diamond Mountain University

Sacred Classics Translator Program, Fall Term 2006

Answer Key, Homework, Class 1

Name:
Date:
Grade:

1) It's been almost five months since we last worked on our translation of *Uma Chidun* and so instead of immediately jumping back into it, we should take some time to review the outline of the text and our progress so far.

What is the English translation of the title of this book; who is the author (including his dates); and what is the name of the institution for which it is the monastic textbook? What is the generic name of the companion monastic textbook on the same classical Buddhist subject (give both the Tibetan and English)?

"Overview of the Middle Way" by Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye (1493 – 1568).

དབུ་མ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི།

uma chidun

མཁའ་མཁའ་བསྟན་པ་དར་བྱས།

Kedrup Tenpa Dargye

It is the monastic textbook for Sera Mey College of Sera Monastery. The accompanying textbook is "Analysis of the Middle Way".

དབུ་མ་མཐའ་ཁྱེད།

uma tachu

2) *Uma Chidun* is a thorough treatment of what subject matter? Why study this subject?

It is a thorough treatment of emptiness because it is the object that one must realize to achieve not only full enlightenment, but even liberation from suffering (nirvana).

3) What is the Tibetan word for “an outline” or “table of contents”? Comment on its pronunciation and on the breakdown of the word.

ས་བཅད།

sab che

The word is pronounced *sab-che*. It is an example of an exception to standard modern Tibetan pronunciation in that the “ba” prefix of the second syllable is pronounced – serving like a suffix letter to the open vowelised first syllable.

The word *sa* means “level” or “ground”; and the word *che* means “to split” or “to sever”. Together, they mean “division”; “list of topics”; “outline” or “table of contents”.

4) What is the *middle way* we are *entering* in this text in the form of scripture, as interpreted and explained by which subsequent Indian classical commentators?

The Root Text on Wisdom by Arya Nagarjuna (c. 200 AD) as interpreted and explained by Masters Aryadeva and Buddhapalita and especially Master Chandrakirti (c. 650 AD) whose seminal work, *Entering the Middle Way*, serves as the root text for Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye’s explanation. Master Chandrakirti often refers to Arya Nagarjuna’s root text simply as *The Middle Way*.

5) What is the *middle way* that we aspire to *enter* in the form of realizations?

Ultimately, it is the direct perception of emptiness as this is the watershed realization that destroys the root of our ignorance which is responsible for all our suffering.

Here in the highest Buddhist philosophical school (Middle Way Consequence group), the perception of emptiness is the middle way between these two extreme wrong views: that things do have a nature of their own ('the extreme of grasping to self-existence'); and, that things do not have any self-nature then they do not exist ('the extreme of nihilism').

Expressed yogically, *entering the middle way* is causing the inner winds within the side channels of the inner body to enter into the middle (central) channel, precipitating the perception of emptiness.

6) What are the three steps of the famous Tibetan monastic dialectical approach to debating an issue and uncovering truth that is perhaps the Tibetans' most important contribution to the world's epistemological pursuit, and of which *Uma Chidun* is such a foremost example? Give both the Tibetan phrases and the English translation.

1) Refutation of the opponents' views

གཞན་ལྟགས་དགག་པ།

shen luk gakpa

2) Presentation of one's own position

རང་ལྟགས་བཞག་པ།

rang luk shakpa

3) Disproving the opponents' rebuttal (overcoming their objections)

ཕྱི་དང་སྤྱོད་བ།

tsu pa pongwa

Together, they are referred to as:

དགག་བཞག་སྤྱོད་སྟུང་།

gak shak pong sum

7) What is the kindest thing that a Teacher can do for the student?

It is to train them and empower them to teach emptiness to others. The Lama can't give karma to the student; the student needs to collect the karma themselves to see emptiness directly and become enlightened. Teaching emptiness to others is an incredibly powerful virtue that causes you to increase your own understanding of emptiness. So the kindest thing that a Lama can do for the student is to teach them to teach emptiness.