



Name:
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Sacred Classics Translator Program - Winter Term, 2005

Answer Key, Homework, Class 5

1) List the seven LA DON (ལ་དོན) - the Tibetan language universal prepositions - and briefly explain the grammar rules of when each may be used (that is, they follow nouns that end in which specific letters?)

The seven LA DON (ལ་དོན་བརྟན།) are: ལྷ་ རུ་ ར་ ཏུ་ ཉ་ ལ་ ཏུ།

SU RU RA DU NA LA TU

They all share the same function as the preposition LA (ལ་) - the universal (dative-locative) preposition. That is, they all mean "to", "at", "in" or "for", but which specific preposition is used depends on whether the style is literary or colloquial, and on the specific ending of the preceding noun.

Generally speaking, LA (ལ་) and RA (ར་) are used for colloquial language and

SU (སུ་) RU (རུ་) DU (དུ་) NA (ན་) and TU (ཏུ་) for literary language.

In colloquial expression, ལ་ is generally used after every noun, regardless of its specific ending, although ར་ may be added to a noun that has no suffix. For example, one can say PHA LA (ཕ་ལ་) or simply PHAR (ཕ་ར་) - "to the father"; SA LA (ས་ལ་) or SAR (ས་ར་) - "to the ground".

In literary expression, these rules generally apply:

ལྷ་ is used after a noun ending with SA (ས་); e.g. སེམས་ལྷ་ - in the mind.

ཏྲ་ is used after a noun ending with NGA (ང་) DA(ད་) NA(ན་) MA(མ་) RA(ར་) and LA(ལ་)

ཁྱ་ is used after a noun ending with GA (ག་) and BA (བ་)

ཆུ་ is used after a noun ending with ར་ or a noun which has no suffix - like སྤྱི་ (ground)

མྱ་ may be used after any suffix.

2) How many secondary suffix letters are there in Tibetan? Do they affect the pronunciation of the word? Do they change the meaning of the word?

The two secondary suffix letters are SA (ས་) and DA (ད་), although ད་ is almost never used anymore. It was often used in more ancient times to past tense verbs ending with མྱ་ ར་ or ལ་

They do not alter the pronunciation of the word, however they create a different word which can be very different in meaning to the word spelt without the secondary suffix.

For example RIG (རིག་) means "mind" or "intelligence", "knowledge" or "awareness". RIGS (རིགས་) - same pronunciation - means "type" or "family".

RTOG PA (རྟོག་པ་) means "conceptual thought" and can mean a wrong thought.

RTOGS PA (རྟོགས་པ་) - same pronunciation - means "realization"!

3) According to Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye, there are two ways in which Master Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way* "enters" into Arya Nagarjuna's *The Root Text on Wisdom* through the profound side of the teachings. What are they?

Firstly, *Entering the Middle Way* presents eight unique characteristics by which to distinguish the Middle Way Consequence Group from the Middle Way Independent Group and the other three lower schools. Secondly, the text allows a person to realize that it would be incorrect to interpret the ultimate intention of the Arya Nagarjuna's *The Root Text on Wisdom* as being that of the Mind-only School.

4) Why should these eight characteristics be of any interest to practitioners who consider themselves to hold a Prasangika worldview?

These eight characteristics are of very great importance because one is not truly living by highest worldview until one knows, understands and applies them in all aspects of one's life and spiritual practice.

5) We know that both groups of the Middle Way refutes the Mind Only School's assertion of a foundation consciousness (གཏུན་གཤིན།) and the ability of the mind to know itself in a single moment (རང་རིག།). Yet Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye describes a distinctive way in the Middle Way Consequence Group refutes their existence. What is it?

The Middle Way Consequence Group refutes the existence of a foundation consciousness and the ability of the mind to know itself in a single moment due to its more basic position that nothing, including mental consciousness, has any nature of its own. This is a position unique to the Consequence Group and as such is not found in the texts of the Independent Group on down.