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Sacred Classics Translator Program – Spring Term, 2005

Answer Key, Homework, Class 8

1) In commencing a discussion on the three causes of the holy birth of a bodhisattva (compassion, the wisdom that transcends duality, and the Wish for enlightenment), Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states that is not enough to define this ‘great compassion’ as the wish that living beings be freed from suffering. Explain. Give also the Tibetan phrase for ‘great compassion’.

The ‘great compassion’ (SNYING RJE CHEN PO) སྙིང་རྩེ་ཆེན་པོ། that gives birth to a bodhisattva is not merely the wish that living beings be freed from suffering (which is a Hinayana flavor of great compassion). Rather, it is the Mahayana flavor of great compassion which is the wish to protect all living beings from suffering. The use here of the word ‘protect’ infers the acknowledgement of personal responsibility in delivering living beings from suffering.

2) What does Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye state is *not* the wisdom that transcends duality, and what does he state it *is*? Why? Give also the Tibetan phrase for ‘the wisdom that transcends duality’.

Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states the wisdom that transcends duality (GNYIS MED KYI SHES RAB) གཉིས་མེད་གྱི་ཤེས་རབ། is not the wisdom that perceives that the two of form and what perceives this form are no two different things. Rather, it is the wisdom that no longer remains in either of the two extremes.

It seems that Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye is rejecting the view of emptiness asserted by the Mind Only School which, according to the Middle Way Consequence Group, is deficient in that it still holds to some truly existent aspect of the mind and karmic seeds themselves.

3) He then presents some debates about the meaning of the Wish for enlightenment. What is his fault with defining the Wish as the state of mind where you say to yourself, 'I will deliver every living being in this world from the suffering of the cycle, and guide them to the state of total enlightenment'? Further, is there a distinction between achieving one's own needs and goals, and achieving the needs and goals of others?

Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye responds that this definition of the Wish is incomplete in that it does provide for the meeting of one's own goals - that is, reaching total and complete enlightenment oneself.

One quality of an enlightened being is often stated to be that they have 'satisfied both the needs' - that is, the needs of themselves and others. From one view, reaching one's own total and complete enlightenment can be seen as achieving one's own needs and goals. However, in that the motivation for reaching enlightenment is to be able to perfectly serve all living beings, and in that one is unable to perfectly serve all others until one becomes fully enlightened, it is also arguable that reaching one's own enlightenment becomes indistinguishable from satisfying the needs of all others.