



Diamond Mountain University

Sacred Classics Translator Program, Fall Term 2006

Answer Key, Homework, Class 2

Name:
Date:
Grade:

1) We continue with our review of our progress so far in translating *Uma Chidun*. Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye gives three divisions of the “middle way” which is the subject of the scriptures on the middle way. Briefly describe these three.

The three types of “middle way” that are the subject of the books on the middle way are:

- (i) **“Foundation” middle way** – the fact that no object has no nature of its own. It is the middle way between the extreme that objects exist self-existently and the extreme that objects do not exist at all if they do not exist from their own side.
- (ii) **“Path” middle way** – the direct perception of “foundation” middle way; the direct perception that things have no nature of their own; being a state of mind between these two extremes of self-existence and nihilism. This type of middle way rests on the former because one can only validly perceive that objects have no nature of their own if this in fact true.
- (iii) **“Result” middle way** – achieving the end of one of the three Buddhist tracks (listener, self-made Buddha, bodhisattva). For example, a practitioner of the listener track achieving nirvana. This type of middle way rests on the former types as one can only achieve nirvana (the permanent cessation of one’s mental afflictions) through the power of directly perceiving emptiness.

2) Among the different types of “middle way”, what is the specific middle way that we are entering into in this text?

We are entering into the middle way in the form of the words used to express the middle way, specifically Arya Nagarjuna’s *The Root Text on Wisdom* which is his expression and description of foundation middle way.

3) Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states that Master Chandrakirti’s *Entering the Middle Way* enters into the true intent of Arya Nagarjuna’s text by refuting the Mind-Only School interpretation, specifically by refuting the idea that something could grow from something else by definition. Explain this with reference to the example of any relationship between working and making money. Does this mean that there is no cause and effect? What lesson does this hold for us as teachers?

Master Chandrakirti denies that anything that has any power within itself to cause any result. For example, money does not come from working. This is proved by the fact that some people work hard but don’t receive their pay; and other people may not work at all but they nevertheless receive money.

However, this is does not mean that cause and effect does not work in any way. Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye explicitly states that how Master Chandrakirti “goes on to demonstrate how – nonetheless – all the workings of cause and effect are perfectly reasonable; but only in a way established through terms and projections.” That is, cause and effect occurs deceptively – as a projection dependent upon the karma we have collected.

The lesson this holds for us as teachers is that it is not enough to shock the audience with the statement that nothing comes from anything else. We need then to follow it up with the teaching that things do occur in dependence upon our karma. Money does not come from working, but because everything exists a karmic projection, money does result from giving and taking responsibility for and care of others. We need to teach both emptiness *and* karma together (“the marriage of emptiness and karma”).

4) Explain how practitioners of all three tracks are equivalent in the need to perceive emptiness directly? Again, what implication does that have for us as teachers?

According to the highest school, one must directly perceive emptiness not only to achieve full and perfect enlightenment, but also to reach nirvana (the permanent cessation of all mental afflictions).

What this means for us as teachers is that even if students do not have a mahayana motivation, even if they only want to be happy in this life, you still have to teach them emptiness at some stage for them to achieve happiness. There is simply no other way to reach happiness other than perceiving emptiness. Even good deeds performed without an understanding of emptiness just bring suffering.

5) Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye discusses how particular texts are specifically designed for certain disciples. Again, what does this mean for us as teachers and as translators? How does this relate to the distinction between literal and figurative teachings?

We must target the audience whom we are teaching and pitch the level of our teaching and modify our vocabulary to meet the students 'specific needs and capacity so that the teaching is the most beneficial for each respective audience.

Likewise when translating a foreign text, we should decide the type of audience we intend to reach out to with our translation, and purposefully employ vocabulary that is pitched to the audience.

By pitching each teaching to the specific audience, over time our teachings will differ and may even appear to be inconsistent. When reviewing different teachings over a period of time, the student will need to figure out which teachings are literal and which are figurative.

6) Since Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye refers to and quotes so extensively Master Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way*, we decided in this class to commence a clean up of our work-in-progress translation of that text. Write the Tibetan phrase for "In the language of India" and explain its origin.

The Tibetan phrase for “In the language of India” is:

གྱ་ཀར་ཀེ་དུ།

gya kar ke du

Gya (RGYA) means ‘wide’ or ‘big’, and *kar* (GAR) is related to the word *karmo* (DKAR PO) meaning ‘white’. It became the word for ‘India’ – literally, ‘the large land of the white’ because back when the Tibetans were creating their vocabulary, Indians were known for wearing white cloth.

In contrast, the Tibetan word for China is RGYA NAG (*gya nak*), where the word *nak* means ‘black’: the large country where the people wear black.

7) Next, write and explain the Tibetan phrase for “In the language of Tibet”.

The Tibetan phrase for “In the language of Tibet” is:

བུ་ཀེ་དུ།

bu ke du

Bu (BOD) is related to the Tibetan verb ‘to shout’ and reflects the idea that Tibet is within calling distance (“a stone’s throw away”) from India, the motherland, the holy land – the land of the Aryas.

8) In the third verse of *Uma La Jukpa* Master Chandrakirti bows down to compassion for living beings – “who begin by thinking ‘Me’, entranced by the idea of a self; and then find themselves attached to things – to the My’”. Is it wrong to think that you have a self; that you and other things exist? Distinguish between the self that does exist and the self that does not exist and give the Tibetan for these two phrases.

There is a misconception that Buddhists do not believe in a ‘self’. Obviously, however, we do exist, and we can validly speak of a “me” and of “my”. However, the self that Buddhists deny is a self-existent self – an object that exists out there in and of itself - that we ignorantly grasp to. For example, some food that we can keep for ourselves by hiding it from others.

The self that does exist is that which comes from our karma. For example, the meals that we enjoy only because we have shared with others and provided for others in the past.

ཡོད་སྐྱུའི་བདག་

yu gyuy dak

the self that does exist

མེད་སྐྱུའི་བདག་

me gyuy dak

the self that does not exist