



Diamond Mountain University

Sacred Classics Translator Program, Fall Term 2006

Answer Key, Homework, Class 3

Name:
Date:
Grade:

1) We continue with our cleaning up of our work-in-progress translation of Master Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way*. In his famous opening lines why does he state that living beings "continue then like a water wheel, helplessly turning, on and on."

Living beings perpetuate their suffering by reacting ignorantly to each event that happens to them, creating the causes for their suffering to continue on and on in the future. Because we don't understand the nature of things we are bound to suffer. We are like the buckets in a water mill that go round and round – perpetuating cycles of pain that run from life and life and within the present life. No knowledge other than an understanding of karma and emptiness is of any help to overcome suffering.

2) The next lines of *Entering the Middle Way* state that the "bodhisattvas see these beings as flickering, and devoid of having any real nature." What two ideas are contained here?

It is a reference to two of the types of compassion. Firstly, the compassion that perceives the impermanence of living being; that they are changing moment to moment and simply progressing to aging and death when their life will pass like a dream. Secondly, the compassion that perceives the lack of a self-nature of living beings; that our perception of others is a direct reflection of the way we have loved and treated others. If we are seeing people in our world get sick or old, and die then it is the result of our imperfections.

3) We are at the part of *Uma Chidun* where Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye has commenced his treatment of the ten bodhisattva levels as part of his explanation of the main body of *Entering the Middle Way*. He is going to give specific attention to the sixth bodhisattva level which relates to the perfection of the wisdom. Why is the sixth perfection of particular importance compared with the preceding five?

Even virtuous deeds such as giving money to the needy performed without an understanding of emptiness only produce a limited benefit. They cause a fleeting pleasant result but they have no lasting effect and no power to bring an end to suffering. However, if you imbue your practice of the first five perfections with wisdom – with the understanding of emptiness and how reality works – then your good deeds do have the power to change your world completely and indefinitely. That is why seeing emptiness directly is the highest thing you can do for yourself and others. You will then perfectly understand that every living being, and yourself, is your karmic projection. It is wisdom that makes all the difference and so the study of emptiness is given special emphasis over the preceding five perfections.

4) Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye gives a summary and outline of the points he proposes to explain in detail about the first bodhisattva level and references the relevant lines of Master Chandrakirti's root text where these points are originally presented.

More specifically, we finished last term at the section where he refers to the lines of *Entering the Middle Way* that explain the qualities that “make one's mind beautiful” upon reaching this bodhisattva level. The relevant quotation from the root text includes the statement that the bodhisattva has “taken birth into the family of Those Gone Thus” and has “eliminated every form of the three different shackles.” What are the three shackles? Write the Tibetan for “the three shackles” as it appears in the root text and explain its literal meaning.

The intellectual belief in self-existence; doubt about the truth of the path; and subscription to harmful ascetic practices.

ཀུན་ཏུ་སྤྱིར་གསུམ།

kun jor sum

Here, *kun* is an abbreviation of *kuntu* which means “completely”; *jor* is an abbreviation of *jorwa* meaning “to join together”; and *sum* means “three”. Together, these are the three states of mind that completely bind us to suffering existence. One eliminates these negative states of mind permanently upon seeing emptiness directly and reaching the first bodhisattva level.

5) Master Chandrakirti’s root text also states that “The bodhisattva holds the very highest form of bliss”. Comment.

Upon seeing emptiness directly (and then reaching the first bodhisattva level), the bodhisattva reaches the bliss that comes from the profound realizations achieved in the latter part of the path of seeing – such as having seen directly their future lives and the day of their coming enlightenment; having met directly the Buddha; having seen the face of every living being in the entire universe and understanding that they will spend the rest of their existence helping these living beings. The bodhisattva has reached that profound high state where they can no longer be dissuaded from the path or suffer any real mental anguish or become upset about things because of what they have seen directly. The bodhisattva’s bliss is not so much a physical ecstasy but the unwavering and deep contentment that comes from knowing one’s spiritual destiny and that one will shortly reach complete and perfect enlightenment – a state of indescribable paradise.

Ordinary beings – those who have not seen emptiness directly yet – enjoy no such certainty or guarantee about their lives such as whether they will even be alive tomorrow or which realm they will end up in their future lives.

6) Master Chandrakirti’s *Uma La Jukpa* then states the bodhisattva has as well “the power to shake a hundred different planets”. Briefly explain the two meanings of this statement.

First, it is a reference to the fact that when a bodhisattva sees emptiness directly there is a energetic jolt that runs through the universe that is felt by beings of a certain high spiritual level. Secondly, within a short amount of time the inner body of the bodhisattva will open to the point that they are aware that their actions are influencing many worlds and reverberate across many planets.