



Name:
Date:
Grade:

Sacred Classics Translator Program - Fall Term, 2004

Answer Key, Homework, Class 3

- 1) Describe briefly how the first five rows and the first two columns of the Tibetan alphabet are organized. Which sounds do or do not exist in the English language?

The sounds move up from the throat to the lips.

First 5 rows (not including the third one down)

KA is guttural

CA is palatal

TA is dental

PA is labial

TZA is back to dental

First two columns

the first is non-aspirated

the second is aspirated

The non-aspirated sound does not exist in English. The aspirated sound does.

- 2) What is the difference between transliteration and pronunciation? Give an example from the title of the text that we are translating.

Transliteration is the use of English letters to represent the specific spelling of each Tibetan word according to some established system, such as ACIP or Wylie.

Pronunciation is using the closest English letters to the actual sound of the Tibetan word.

For example, the transliteration of the short title of the text is *dgongs pa rab gsal*.

The pronunciation, however, is *gong pa rab sel*.

- 3) Some Western translators seem to have confused transliteration and pronunciation. Give an example of the problem that this can lead to.

The pronunciation of Geshe Michael's Root Lama's name is Ken Rinpoche Geshe Lobsang *Tarchin* (italics added). The first syllable from *Tarchin* is an aspirated 'ta' which is typically transliterated as 'tha'. Hence people have sometimes written this word in his name as 'Tharchin', mixing up transliteration and pronunciation.

- 4) List the holy beings to whom Je Tsongkapa next pays homage after the 'Lord of the Able Ones'?

**Arya Nagarjuna
Aryadeva
Buddhapalita
Master Chandrakirti
Master Shantideva**

- 5) Je Tsongkapa writes of the three great *SHING RTA* (ཤིང་རྟ།).

What is the literal meaning of this word? What does it actually mean and to whom does it refer?

It literally means a horse of wood; that is, a chariot. Here, it means an innovator or pioneer. It refers to Arya Nagarjuna, Arya Asanga and a third great being as yet unidentified in Je Tsongkapa's text.

- 6) Je Tsongkapa writes that he is composing this text *GZHAN KYIS BSKUL* (གཞན་གྱིས་བསྐྱུལ།). What does this mean?

GZHAN KYIS BSKUL means that it was written merely at the request of his students to clarify the meaning of Master Chandrakirti's *Entering the Middle Way*. It reflects the custom that an author does not compose a text solely for his or her own interest or need, but rather out of a wish to fulfill the needs of others.

7) When you encounter a possible error in the text what do you do? Give an example of one found in class and what was done. What text are we going to rely on principally as the most correct version, and why?

You go to one of the other versions available to you and check what they state. For example, CHE BA'I had been input as CHE PA'I. We will principally rely on the Trashi Hlunpo edition of the text as the most correct version because it is the one from the home monastery of His Holiness the first Panchen Lama, the author of the text we are studying in the first year of the Tantric Course series.

8) Je Tsongkapa writes that he will present an explanation of *Entering the Middle Way* staying true to the RANG GI 'GREL (རང་གི་འགྲེལ།). What does this mean and to what does it refer?

It means auto-commentary. It refers to Master Chandrakirti's own commentary on his *Entering the Middle Way*.

9) What mistake might novice translators make with respect to laying out the chapters of their translation of this text?

They might adopt the Tibetan outline as the chapters of the translation and so use four chapters even though the first three parts of the text are extremely brief and almost all of the text is in the fourth section.