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Sacred Classics Translator Program

Answer Key, Course 2 Final Examination - Winter Term, 2005

1) What five letters of the Tibetan alphabet function as prefix letters?

ག། ད། བ། མ། ར།

ga da ba ma 'a

2) How does Kedrup Tenpa Dargye connect the seventh chapter of Arya Nagarjuna's *Root Text on Wisdom* with his *Seventy Lines on Emptiness*?

In the seventh chapter of *Root Text on Wisdom*, Arya Nagarjuna states that the starting, staying and stopping of things are all just like a dream, an illusion and the city of the spirits; that is, they have no nature of their own. *Seventy Lines on Emptiness* explains why this is the case. Among other things, this subsequent text explains that when Lord Buddha taught that the starting, staying and stopping of things does exist, He had in mind that they only exist as such nominally.

3) What are the five vowels of the Tibetan alphabet? What are their symbols?

The four *written* vowels of the Tibetan alphabet (shown here with the consonant ལྷ།) are:

ལྷི།	ལྷུ།	ལྷེ།	ལྷོ།
giku	shabkyu	drengbu	naro
i	u	e	o
"ee" sound	"oo" sound	"eh" sound	"o" sound

All the consonants of the Tibetan alphabet, unless modified, carry an 'inherent' "a" sound which is not written. For example, ལྷ། without any written vowel or other modification is pronounced 'ah'.

4) Kedrup Tenpa Dargye presents a rare review of the different interpretations that the classical Indian masters took of the teachings of Arya Nagarjuna and Master Aryadeva. Briefly describe how Masters Buddhapalita and Bhavaviveka interpreted the true intent of the realized Father and Son, and in so doing the two schools of thought that they established.

Master Buddhapalita interpreted the true intent of Arya Nagarjuna and Master Aryadeva as that of the Consequence School (*Prasangika*). Master Bhavaviveka refuted Master Buddhapalita's position and interpreted the realized Father and Son's true meaning as that of the Independent School (*Svatantrika*). In so doing, these two Indian Masters respectively established the Middle Way Consequence and the Middle Way Independent Schools.

Master Bhavaviveka's position was subsequently adopted by masters Jnyanagarbha, Shantarakshita, Vimuktisena and Haribhadra.

5) What changes do the suffixes ལྷོ་ ལྷོ་ and ལྷོ་ make to the pronunciation of a word?

These suffixes ‘umlaut’ or ‘voice’ the pronunciation of the word. That is, the inherent ‘ah’ vowel sound of the word changes to an ‘eh’ vowel sound; or the ‘o’ vowel sound changes to ‘u’ vowel sound.

In addition to voicing the word, the ལྷོ་ suffix strongly shortens the length of the pronunciation of the word, while the ལྷོ་ suffix elongates the pronunciation of the word. The ལྷོ་ suffix does not change the length of the pronunciation of the word.

6) Kedrup Tenpa Dargye reviews the different interpretations of Arya Nagarjuna’s position put forth by his followers. Whose commentary does he say he will follow in explaining his own position? What are the two general reasons that he gives for this decision?

Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states that he will follow Master Chandrakirti’s *Entering the Middle Way* in explaining his own position because firstly, Master Chandrakirti studied *The Root Text on Wisdom* from Arya Nagarjuna directly and, secondly, because he was a ‘being of truth’ who completely understood the meaning of Arya Nagarjuna’s text.

7) In commencing his presentation on the precise “Middle Way” that we are entering by way of following Master Chandrakirti’s *Entering the Middle Way*, Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states that the "middle way" can be divided, if only nominally, into two different “middle ways”. Name these two ways and explain what is meant by "nominally".

The “Middle Way” can be divided into the words used to express the middle way, and into the subject of those words. By specifying that this two way division is "nominal", Kedrup Tenpa Dargye is implying that only one of the two is the "real" Middle Way.

8) Finally, among these two types of "middle way" and their own sub-division of types of middle way, what is *the* middle way that Kedrup Tenpa Dargye declares we are specifically entering by following Master Chandrakirti's text?

Kedrup Tenpa Dargye states that we are entering the middle way in the form of the words used to explain it; that is, what Master Chandrakirti means by the "classical commentary on the middle way". This is a specific reference by Master Chandrakirti to Arya Nagarjuna's *The Root Text on Wisdom*.

9) 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་བདུན།) are: ལྷ རུ ར འ ལ ལྷ།

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 (སྷ) RU (རུ) DU (འ) NA (ལ) and TU (ལྷ) 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:

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

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

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

ཏྲ་ is used after a noun ending with འ་ or a noun which has no suffix - like སྤ། (ground)

ན་ may be used after any suffix.

10) 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.

11) Give the translation for this very important and famous statement of how things exist:

MING BRDAS BZHAG TZAM མིང་བདམ་བཞག་ཙམ།

Which school subscribes to this view? What comes first - the things that gets the name or the name that is given to the thing?

The statement translates as "merely established through terms and projections", "merely established by name and term".

This is the view of the Middle Way Consequence Group as to how all things exist.

The ignorant mind thinks that the thing that gets the name comes first. It exists out there from its own side and we simply apply the appropriate name to the object in accordance with what the thing really is.

Highest Middle Way explains that the name comes first. When we perceive an object, we think of it in a certain way and then apply a certain label or name to it in accordance with our ripening karma which is forcing us to experience the object in this way.

That is, the word comes first. "In the beginning there was the Word." We give the object the specific name (e.g. chocolate cake) and this brings the object into existence for us. This also means that there was never any first chocolate cake. We perceive a chocolate cake because of karmic seeds planted in the past of seeing chocolate cake and sharing it with others.

12) Let's continue with some more vocabulary. Please translate the following:

(a) ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ། (THAMS CAD MKHYEN PA): **omniscience**

(b) ཐེག་དམན། (THEG DMAN): **lower way (Hinayana)**

(c) ཐེག་ཆེན། (THEG CHEN): **greater way (Mahayana)**

(d) རྒྱ་ཆེ་བ། (RGYA CHE BA): **far-reaching**

(e) དངོས། (DNGOS): **explicit**

13) Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye uses the phrase: ཆེད་དུ་བྱ་བའི་གདམས་བྱེད།

(CHED DU BYA BA'I 'DUL BYA) to prove something about Arya Nagarjuna's *The Root Text on Wisdom*.

What is the meaning of this phrase and how does he use it to counter an objection about the subject matter of the text?

The phrase ཆེད་དུ་བྱ་བའི་གདམས་བྱེད། (CHED DU BYA BA'I 'DUL BYA) means "the disciples for whom the (text) was specifically designed". Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye uses this phrase in proving that *The Root Text on Wisdom* does indeed present the far-reaching side of the teachings (Bodhisattva activity). He states that the specific disciples for whom this text was written are those practitioners of the greater way who will be able to achieve the far-reaching steps of the path solely in reliance on this one text - that is, without needing to rely upon any other Sutra or classical commentary. That is, by studying the profound side of the teachings (emptiness) the disciples will automatically understand Bodhisattva activity.

Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye proves this is possible by referring to the precedent of Lord Maitreya's *Ornament of Realizations* which works the converse way - explicitly presenting the far-reaching side of the teachings for specific disciples who, by studying Bodhisattva activity as set out in that text, would automatically achieve the profound side of the teachings (emptiness).

14) Please translate the following words that appear in the Scriptures:

(a) འཕགས་པ། ('PHAGS PA): **Realized Being (Arya)**

(b) ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པ། (LAM GYI RIM PA): **Steps of the Path**

(c) སོ་སོ་སྐྱེ་བོ། (SO SO SKYE BO): **ordinary being**

(d) སེམས་ཅམ། (SEMS TZAM): **Mind-Only School**

(e) ཉན་ཐོས། (NYAN THOS): **Listener**

- (f) ལུང་རིགས། (LUNG RIGS): **Scriptural authority and reasoning**
- (g) ལུ་སྒྲུབ། (KLU SGRUB): **Nagarjuna**
- (h) ལྷ་བ་གྲགས་པ། (ZLA BA GRAGS PA): **Chandrakirti**

15) Master Kedrup Tenpa Dargye now commences a new section of his book where he explains Master Chandrakirti's མཚོད་པར་བརྗོད་པ། (MCHOD PAR BRJOD PA). What is this, and why did Master Chandrakirti include it?

མཚོད་པར་བརྗོད་པ། (MCHOD PAR BRJOD PA) means "Offering of Praise". It is typical for an author to commence with an offering of praise because by dedicating the work to something special and holy, the author is seeking to collect sufficient good karma to be able to see the book through to its completion and overcome the many obstacles that any virtuous projects seems to attract.

16) Master Chandrakirti writes that Buddhas are born from Bodhisattvas, and that Bodhisattvas come from three things. What are these three causes (in English and/or Tibetan)?

- 1.) ལྷིང་རྗེ། (SNYING RJE): **compassion**
- 2.) གཉིས་སུ་མེད་སྒོ། (GNYIS SU MED BLO): **the non-dualistic mind**
- 3.) བྱང་ཚུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས། (BYANG CHUB KYI SEMS): **the Wish for Enlightenment**