



Name:

Date:

Grade:

Final Examination

1) Give the title of the primary text used for our study of the art of interpretation; name its author, and give his dates. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

2) Nowadays some people say that a knowledge of emptiness is not the main point of Buddhism, while others say that emptiness is something known only intuitively, and not from a foundation of determined, organized study. Describe a quotation by Lord Buddha himself that disproves these ideas.

3) Why do we have to learn to distinguish between the literal and figurative; why do we have to learn to interpret what the Buddha said, in order to find out what he really meant?

4) Je Tsongkapa points out that—if what the Buddha said must be divided into what he said that was figurative and what he said that was literal—then the Buddha's own statements about when he was being figurative and when he was being literal cannot necessarily be taken literally. Rather, we must in the end rely on what is logical and makes sense to us. Describe the three logical tests recommended by Lord Buddha, and state the source for them.

5) Name the famous three attributes which form the cornerstone of the beliefs of the Mind-Only School, and which relate to the three different lacks of things regarding no existing object having any nature of its own. After naming them, describe them briefly. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

c)

6) Constructs are said to "lack any definitive nature." Explain what it means in the Mind-Only School when we say this; and then contrast it to what we mean in the Middle-Way School when we say this.

a)

b)

7) In explanations of the process of making constructs that follow from the *Commentary on the True Intent*, a distinction is made between the dependent thing that is the object of the constructing state of mind; the constructing state of mind itself; and the construct that "lies between" them. Explain these three as they occur in the example of the boy named Tashi.

8) The sutra goes on to use the three expressions "arena in which the constructing state of mind acts" and so on as a basis for describing dependent things and totality (or emptiness) as well as constructs. In other words, these three expressions are being used to get at the real meaning of the three attributes in the Mind-Only School; and more especially how they relate to each other. Describe this interrelation of the three attributes.

9) Name the three famous turnings of the wheel of the Dharma, the three great convocations, and state (a) when they were primarily taught; (b) where they were primarily taught; (c) for whom they were primarily taught; (d) their basic subject matter; and (e) what, from the point of view of the "outcome of the exchange," their view was on whether things have their own nature or not. (Tibetan track all in Tibetan!)

(1) First turning of the wheel of the Dharma—

Name:

Period:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

2) Second turning of the wheel of the Dharma—

Name:

Period:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

(3) Third turning of the wheel of the Dharma—

Name:

Period:

Place:

Disciples:

Basic subject matter:

View:

10) According to the Mind-Only School, which of these three turnings of the wheel (also called "groups of sutra") were spoken literally, and which are figurative, or something we must interpret further? According to the Middle-Way School, which are to be taken on face value, and which are not? Why so, in each case?

a)

b)

11) What, in the context of the *Commentary on the True Intent*, is the real criterion that decides whether a person belongs to the "lower way" (Hinayana) or the "higher way" (Mahayana)?

12) What does it mean to "turn" the wheel of the Dharma?

13) Name three goals that the *Commentary on the True Intent* has in mind for us when it takes the trouble to divide the three turnings of the wheel into the categories of figurative or literal.

a)

b)

c)

14) Je Tsongkapa takes pains to disprove the idea of some Tibetan thinkers that all three turnings of the wheel were meant literally. These thinkers would even say that Lord Buddha was speaking literally when he said (actually in order to attract some non-Buddhist groups) that things do have some kind of self-nature. What object do they say that Lord Buddha was referring to, and how is this object sometimes misinterpreted? (Tibetan track name the object in Tibetan and explain the misinterpretation in English.)

15) Who was the innovator who revived the Mind-Only School system in this world; what book did he base this work on; on how do we know that this was the book?

16) This innovator sets forth the meaning of thusness largely through a description of the two extremes, and how to avoid them. Name the two states of mind that hold to these two extremes. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

a)

b)

17) Describe, in a brief sentence, the Middle-Way idea about these two extreme views. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

18) What, according to the Middle-Way School, is "the ultimate" (also called "ultimate truth" or "ultimate reality")? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

19) How does the Middle-Way School describe deceptive reality? (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and describe in English.)

20) Now how does the Mind-Only School draw the difference between "ultimate reality" and "deceptive reality"?

21) Explain how the Consequence part of the Middle-Way School describes what it means to "exist as an external object."

22) This question has two separate parts. (a) What do the members of the Mind-Only School (and those of the Independent part of the Middle-Way School who lean towards them on points such as these) have in mind when they say that "nothing exists as an external object"? (b) What do the Consequence group and the Independents who lean the other way have in mind when they say that they are wrong?

a)

b)

23) What does the Mind-Only School mean when they say that the valid perception which is the subject that perceives a physical object, and the physical object which it perceives, are "of the same substance"? (Tibetan track also give the Tibetan for this concept.)

24) Explain where the name of the Mind-Only School comes from.

25) Now that we have examined how the Mind-Only School thinks that Lord Buddha taught emptiness, we turn to what the Independent group in the Middle-Way School thinks—which hinges on an idea of multiple levels of selflessness. Name this concept in general, and list its three parts. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

26) It's easy to confuse the three tracks with the three different ways mentioned in scripture, especially since the Tibetan for both is the same. State the difference. (Tibetan track name and clarify the three ways in Tibetan.)

27) The Mind-Only School has asserted that there are things that can exist from their own side, through some unique identity of their own. The Independent part of the Middle-Way School has asserted that the perception of things depends on their appearing from their own side to a state of mind which, from its side, is unerring. How does the Consequence part of the Middle-Way School assert that things exist? (Tibetan track answer in Tibetan.)

28) When we say that things are only projections, does that mean that we can make anything anything we want it to be?

29) Does the fact that things are only projections mean that leading an ethical way of life is unimportant?

30) Why does the Consequence presentation of the meaning of emptiness have especially important implications for our own search for enlightenment?

31) The *Heart Sutra* says that the real goal of Buddhism is to "stop the process of aging and death" through "stopping our ignorance." Is this a literal or a figurative statement? If it is literal, then why have we not seen any person who stopped the process of aging and death?

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