



Diamond Mountain University
Setting Fire to Your Meditation, Part IV

Homework One: The Bodhisattva Master

1) What is Master Kamalashila's advice for not falling into an extreme after meditating deeply on the fact that nothing at all has any true nature?

2) According to Lord Buddha, at what point does a bodhisattva become a master of "dakme", or the absence of a self-existent self?

3) In the beginning of the text, Master Kamalashila describes how compassion is the root of wisdom. But now, near the end of the text, he tells us that wisdom triggers compassion. Explain.

4) Describe the three extraordinary trainings.

5) What is the practice of “khor sum,” or the three spheres? Give an example of how you would practice it in your daily life.

6) According to Master Kamalashila, what are the benefits of remembering the three spheres?

Memorization assignment: Please memorize either the Tibetan or the Sanskrit lines of the heart sutra, starting from “Once I heard this teaching” and going up through “a great gathering of warrior saints.” Please be prepared to recite it from memory by the next class.



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Homework Two: Anything and Everything

1) Explain how we draw lines around indications in order to create the fixed objects in our world:

2) Why is it so important that we understand how these objects are not really fixed?

3) If the image of a cup is just coming from our mind, then why can we feel it as well?

4) How would a bodhisattva constantly use the idea of khor sum, or the three spheres?

5) What does Master Kamalashila mean by the words “any and every action” when he is describing the practice of a bodhisattva?

6) What does Master Kamalashila call bodhisattvas who understand how to use the illusion of the deceptive world to create all the things they want?

7) At this point in the text, how does Master Kamalashila define the combination of method and wisdom? Explain how this differs from his previous definitions of the two, using some examples from previous courses:

Memorization assignment: Please memorize the line of the heart sutra, either in Tibetan or Sanskrit, starting from “At a certain moment the Conqueror went into deep meditation...” Please be prepared to recite it from memory by the next class.



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Homework Three: Four Stages on the Path of Preparation

1) Describe the heap of feeling, and how it relates to the heap of form and that of discrimination:

2) Do we need to have renunciation in order to have an intellectual understanding of emptiness? Why or why not?

3) Describe the moment when we have reached the path of preparation:

3) List and describe the four stages on the path of preparation:

a)

b)

c)

d)

4) Why is the path of preparation referred to as the level where we are “acting out of faith”?

5) On what stage do you stop being able to go to the lower realms, and why?

Memorization assignment: Please memorize the line of the heart sutra, either in Tibetan or Sanskrit, starting from “At that moment too did the realized being ...” Please be prepared to recite it from memory by the next class.



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Homework Four: The Path of Seeing

1) Describe the heap of discrimination, and how it relates both to our continued suffering and our path to freedom:

2) Is the Heart Sutra speaking literally when it says "There is no body..."?

3) What is the main obstacle described in these readings to seeing emptiness directly, and why?

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Homework Four: The Path of Seeing

4) Describe the meaning of “fortitude towards the object” and “subsequent fortitude” during the path of seeing:

5) What is it that these eight stages of fortitude eliminate, and what is another name for them?

6) According to Master Kamalashila, how many mental afflictions does one eliminate through the act of seeing emptiness directly? How do they relate to the four truths?

7) How does Master Ngawang Pelden describe the minds of those who have yet seen the four truths?

Memorization assignment: Please memorize the line of the heart sutra, either in Tibetan or Sanskrit, starting from “And then, by the power of the Enlightened One...” Please be prepared to recite everything up through this line from memory by the next class.



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Homework Five: The First Six Bodhisattva Levels

1) Give the names of the first six bodhisattva levels, in all three languages, and what the bodhisattva's predominant focus is for each level:

1st Level:

2nd Level:

3rd Level:

4th Level:

5th Level:

6th Level:

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Homework Five: The First Six Bodhisattva Levels

2) What about the word “consciousness” implies that it is unchanging, and how does that relate to the emptiness of the heap of consciousness?

3) How must a bodhisattva move from one level to the next?

4) On which level does the bodhisattva master the balance between engaging in worldly things and engaging in deep meditation?

5) How many mental afflictions does a bodhisattva remove on the path of seeing, and then how many more are there to eliminate on the path of habituation?

Memorization assignment: Please memorize the line of the heart sutra, either in Tibetan or Sanskrit, starting from “If any son or daughter of noble family hoped...” Please be prepared to recite everything up through this line from memory by the next class.



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Homework Six: The Remaining Bodhisattva Levels

1) Give the names of the last four bodhisattva levels, in all three languages, and what the bodhisattva's predominant focus is for each level:

7th Level:

8th Level:

9th Level:

10th Level:

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Homework Six: The Remaining Bodhisattva Levels

2) What level must you reach in order to completely remove every mental affliction, and what is another name for that level?

3) Describe all the qualities of a person on the tenth bodhisattva level. What is the most important quality?

4) At what point do we remove our learned grasping to things as self-existent, and when do we remove our innate grasping to things as self-existent?

Memorization assignment: Please memorize the line of the heart sutra, either in Tibetan or Sanskrit, starting from “This then is the answer that the lord of power ...” Please be prepared to recite everything up through this line from memory by the next class.



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Final Exam

[Note: this is a take-home exam. Please complete it without the help of any notes or other assistance besides your own mind (well, you can pray to the Lamas I suppose!) Please get this exam back to Andreana by October 31. People who have not completed their final exam will not be allowed to attend the next meditation course.]

1) What is Master Kamalashila's advice for not falling into an extreme after meditating deeply on the fact that nothing at all has any true nature?

2) What is the practice of "khor sum," or the three spheres? Give an example of how you would practice it in your daily life.

3) In the beginning of the text, Master Kamalashila describes how compassion is the root of wisdom. But now, near the end of the text, he tells us that wisdom triggers compassion. Explain.

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FINAL EXAM

4) Explain how we draw lines around indications in order to create the fixed objects in our world:

5) How does Master Kamalashila define the combination of method and wisdom at this point in the text? Explain how this differs from his previous definitions of the two, using some examples from previous courses:

6) Describe the first three of the five heaps, in terms of what our mind does when you interact with an object:

7) Do we need to have renunciation in order to have an intellectual understanding of emptiness? Why or why not?

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FINAL EXAM

8) List and briefly describe the four stages on the path of preparation:

a)

b)

c)

d)

9) What is the main obstacle described in these readings to seeing emptiness directly, and why?

10) What about the word "consciousness" implies that it is unchanging, and how does that relate to the emptiness of the heap of consciousness?

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FINAL EXAM

11) How many mental afflictions does a bodhisattva remove on the path of seeing, and then how many more are there to eliminate on the path of habituation?

12) At what point do we remove our learned grasping to things as self-existent, and when do we remove our innate grasping to things as self-existent?

13) List the names of the ten bodhisattva levels (in whatever language you remember best!):

1st:

2nd:

3rd:

4th:

5th:

6th:

7th:

8th:

9th:

10th:

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FINAL EXAM

14) Please write out from memory either the Tibetan or Sanskrit pronunciation of the Heart Sutra, up through the point we have gotten to in class: