

**Basic Program, Jamyang Buddhist Centre
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Answer Keys to Quiz Questions**

1.
 - a. **Identify ignorance that is the root of samsara.**
 - b. **How is it that when the conception of true existence is overcome, cyclic existence is also overcome?**
 - a. Though in general ignorance is posited as the mere opposite of knowledge, here ignorance is to be taken as the opposite of knowledge that realizes the absence of true existence. Such ignorance is a superimposition of a self of phenomena and a self of persons. The manner of superimposition by ignorance is to conceive that, phenomena, and self, exist by way of their own entity, by way of their own nature, or by way of their being inherently established. This is an innate conception of self.
 - b. The ignorance that conceives persons and phenomena to be truly existent is overcome by finding the view realizing emptiness or selflessness and cultivating it in meditation. When that ignorance is overcome, one overcomes the improper mental application superimposing signs of beauty, ugliness, and so forth upon observing the objects of the conception of true existence. When that is overcome, the other afflictive emotions – attachment and so forth – are overcome. When they are overcome, powerless birth in cyclic existence impelled by actions is overcome, whereby liberation is attained.

2. Make the following distinctions between selflessness of phenomena and of persons:

- a. Is realizing the non-true existence of my eye a realization of the selflessness of persons?
- b. Is realization of the non-true existence of my “I” a realization of the selflessness of persons?
- c. Which of the two selflessness is the realization of the non-true existence of my body?
- d. And of my house?
 - a. Realizing the non-true existence of my eye is a realization of the selflessness of phenomena.
 - b. Realizing the non-true existence of my I is a realization of the selflessness of persons.
 - c. Realizing the non-true existence of my body is a realization of the selflessness of phenomena.
 - d. Realizing the non-true existence of my house is a realization of the selflessness of phenomena.

3. What is the object of observation of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending self, and what is the object of observation of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending mine?

The object of observation of an innate view of the transitory collection apprehending self is the merely imputed I that generates the thought “I” (and apprehends it inherently); the object of observation of an innate view of the transitory collection apprehending mine is just “mine”, or “mine-ness”(and apprehends it inherently).

4. Chandrakirti posits the view of the transitory collection apprehending the self of persons as the root of cyclic existence, while Nagarjuna in *The Precious Garland* indicates that apprehending the aggregates as truly existent, a conception of a self of phenomena, is the root cause of cyclic existence. Why are those two positions not contradictory?

Prasangika-Madhyamika differentiates the two conceptions of self only by way of object of observation; the two do not have different aspects in their mode of apprehension. Therefore,

both these ignorances have the aspect of conceiving their object as truly existent, and there is no contradiction in both the former and later moments of a similar type of ignorance being the root of cyclic existence.

5. Lama Tsongkhapa explains how the view of the selflessness of persons can be generated by way of the ‘four essentials’, also called the four-point analysis.

a. State the four points, and briefly indicate what they mean.

- Identifying the object of refutation or negation: ascertaining how the truly existent self is conceived, by analysing one’s own experience of how it arises.
- Ascertaining the pervasion: that if this self would exist, it has to be either one with or different from the aggregates - that there is no other possibility.
- Refuting the possibility of self and aggregates being inherently one.
- Refuting the possibility of self and aggregates being inherently different.

b. Give an example of the reasoning for the third point that you find convincing.

Refuting that the person and the aggregates are one inherently existent entity.

- If the two – the self and the aggregates – are one inherently established entity, the assertion of a self would be senseless.
- If the self and the aggregates are one, then the self would be many, or, just as there is not more than one self, so too would the aggregates be one.
- If the self and the aggregates are one, the self would die and be buried or cremated when the aggregates die and are buried or cremated:
 - then memory of a former life would not be possible
 - actions done would be wasted
 - there would be meeting with actions not done.

c. Give an example of the reasoning for the fourth point that works for you.

Refuting inherently different self and aggregates

- If the self were inherently different from the aggregates, it would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.
- If the self and aggregates were inherently other, the self could not appropriate the aggregates, and there would not be rebirth.
- There is no self that is inherently other than the aggregates because there is no self apprehended separate from the aggregates; without the aggregates appearing, the self does not appear to the mind.

6. What are the instructions for seeking the ascertainment of the illusory-like.

- Make the object of negation appear well by reasoning, contemplate well inherent existence as it is superimposed by the ignorance in your own continuum, and identify it.
- Contemplate that if such inherent existence would exist, it would not pass beyond oneness and difference, and contemplate the damage to the assertions of the self and the aggregates as both of those.
- Induce ascertainment that sees this damage and make it firm thinking “A person does not in the least have inherent existence.”
- Then, allow the undeniable appearances of the conventions of the person to appear as objects of one’s awareness. Take to mind the dependently arising factors of positing the person as the accumulator of actions and the experiencer of effects, finding ascertainment with respect to how dependent-arising are feasible within the absence of inherent existence.