



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

### ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS FOUR

1. Who is the highest practitioner according the Bhagavad Gita, 6.46-47)?

**Superior to the ascetic, the learned, and to men and women of action, it is the “yogin. . . who, with his innermost soul devoted to Me, faithfully serves Me.”**

2. According to Je Tsongkapa in his *Lam Rim Chenmo*, is it better to have a lot of different Dharma teachers or just a few? Why? And who should one regard as the Teacher?

**Je Tsongkapa believes it is better to have fewer teachers for “these times when those with untrained minds still see faults in the teacher and lose faith.” He also quotes a text by Ratnakarashanti which says, “someone who hears even a single verse and does not conceive its speaker to be his or her guru will be reborn one hundred times as a dog and then will take rebirth in a bad caste.”**

3. What are the two parts of “how to rely on a Teacher” as they are given in the *lam rim* texts?

**How to rely on the Teacher in thought and how to rely on the Teacher in practice.**

4. What are the nine attitudes one should have to respect and serve the teacher?

**1) The attitude which is like the dutiful child; 2) the attitude which is like a diamond; 3) the attitude which is like the earth; “how to assume responsibilities consists of six attitudes: 4) an attitude like the foothills; 5) an attitude like a worldly servant; 6) an attitude like a sweeper; 7) an attitude like a foundation; 8) an attitude like a dog; 9) an attitude like a ferry.**

5. The meditation on the guru starts by focusing on the good qualities you see in your Teacher. By way of review, recall the most important attitude a Dharma student should have towards his or her Teacher. To back up your answer, cite the text called the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapani* and summarize Je Tsongkapa’s brief commentary on the passage.

**The most important attitude, and the root or basis of all other good qualities in the student, is faith. The way to cultivate faith in your teacher as the Buddha is to**



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concentrate on his or her good qualities and to eliminate the tendency to look for his or her faults. As it says in the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapani*,

**“Keep the master’s good qualities in mind  
Never seize upon their faults.  
Keeping their good qualities in mind, you will reach attainments.  
Seizing upon their faults, you will not.”**

Je Tsongkapa comments on this verse by saying, “Your guru might have good qualities for the most part, and have slight faults. If you examine your guru for those faults, this will block your own attainments. Whereas, even in the case of a guru who mostly has faults, you will give rise to your own attainments if you train in faith by focusing on the good qualities while not looking for the faults. Therefore, once someone is your guru, whether he or she has small or great faults, contemplate the disadvantages of examining for his or her faults. Repeatedly think about eliminating that tendency, and then stop it.”

6. In the meditation on the guru, what occurs after one has focused on the actual good qualities of the teacher?

**The mental action of “appreciating” and recalling the many kindnesses your Teacher has shown you, most especially the fact that they have taught you the Dharma. Appreciation also entails profound respect and intense love, based on admiration and respect.**

7. Discuss the final step in the meditation on the guru.

**The final step is to request inspiration from the teacher and try to feel as though one has indeed received it. This involves both the request or prayer, and the total openness to receive what one wishes to obtain.**

8. Krishna says at Bhagavad Gita 9.27, “Whatever you do, Arjuna, whatever you eat or offer or give, whatever austerities you undertake, do it all as an offering to me.” According to Maitreya’s *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras*, what is the first of the three principal ways to rely on your Teacher in practice?

**Offering material gifts. First, one should offer one’s teacher material support. This means to support the teacher’s work financially and materially as “a natural outgrowth and practical expression of appreciation, respect, confidence, and trust in the person and in his or her efforts.” (Quotation from Alexander Berzin’s *Relating to a Spiritual Teacher*.)**

9. What is the second of the three principal ways to rely on your Teacher in practice?

**Respecting and serving with body and speech, by offering help and showing respect. This means to help them with their tasks and show respect and courtesy**



10. What is the third of the three principal ways to rely on your Teacher in practice?

**Practicing in accordance with their words. One should follow one's teacher's advice to the best of one's ability. This means seeking out teacher's advice "only concerning important matters that would affect our spiritual development and practice," and not for trivial things. It does not mean that one gives over responsibility for oneself to the teacher. Rather one listens to the advice of one's teacher with *discriminating awareness*. This can mean discriminating between what one is capable of doing now and what is presently beyond one's means. It also means never doing what one knows to be contradicting the Dharma.**

11. Of all the ways to please your spiritual teacher, which is the highest according to Pabongka Rinpoche and others?

**"To follow his instructions exactly and then offer our practice as a form of worship."**

12. What, according to Je Tsongkapa's *Lam Rim Chenmo*, should you do if your teacher instructs you to do something that is not in accord with your best understanding of the teachings or correct ethics?

**Je Tsongkapa, quoting authoritative texts such as Gunaprabha's *Sutra on the Discipline* and *The Fifty Verses on the Guru*, says in such a case the student should respectfully and politely refuse to do what the teacher has instructed. However, Je Tsongkapa also advises that we should not "take the gurus' wrong actions as a reason for subsequent misbehavior such as disrespecting, reproaching, or despising the gurus."**

13. What, according to Je Tsongkapa, are the benefits of relying on the Teacher, and the faults of not relying on the Teacher?

**"By relying on the teacher, you will come closer to Buddhahood; you will please the conquerors; you will not be bereft of future teachers; you will not fall into miserable realms; neither bad karma nor afflictions will overpower you; through mindfulness of the bodhisattva deeds and by not contradicting them your collection of good qualities will continue to increase, and you will reach all of your provisional and final goals. . . " "If you have taken someone as your teacher and then your method of reliance is wrong, not only will you be harmed by much madness and sickness in this lifetime, but in future lifetimes as well you will experience immeasurable suffering in miserable realms for an immeasurable period of time."**