



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

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

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

## THE YOGA OF WISDOM

### ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS FOUR

1. A crucial component in the cultivation of wisdom is training the mind through learning how to meditate. List the six conditions one needs for an ideal meditation environment.

**a) The place should be conducive to meditation; b) live simply; don't need many things; c) be satisfied with the things you have; d) give up being too busy; e) maintain a very ethical way of life; and f) get rid of sense desires, and desires for worldly pleasures.**

2. What are the fifth and sixth of the “perfections” of a bodhisattva’s way of life, and how do they interrelate?

**The fifth perfection is “meditative contemplation” (*dhyana*) and the sixth perfection is “wisdom” (*prajna*). The highest evolution of meditative concentration is *shamatha*, the ability to put one’s mind one-pointedly on the object of meditation for long periods of time. When that ability is focused on discerning the true nature of reality it is called *vipashyana* and ultimately leads to the direct perception of emptiness, the highest form of wisdom.**

3. What are the “eight worldly thoughts” that can disturb our peace of mind and undermine our wisdom?

**They are to be too elated or dejected about gain and loss, pleasure and pain, praise and blame, and fame and dishonor. A person whose mind is uncontrolled and who is attached to worldly things will be one who is obsessed with material gain, sense pleasures, praise, and fame and is overly concerned about avoiding their opposites.**

4. The Gita (6.9) says that one should maintain “impartiality” or equanimity regarding “close friends, comrades, enemies” and “toward the virtuous and evil-doers.” Discuss what equanimity really means within the context of the “four immeasurables” and give two reasons why they are called “immeasurables.”

**The “four immeasurables” are a) *maitri* or loving-kindness, the wish that others be happy; b) *karuna* or compassion, the wish that others be free from suffering; c) *mudita* or joy, the wish that others obtain the highest form of happiness; and**



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**d) *upeksha* or equanimity, which is the wish that all beings regard all other beings as being equally worthy of one's love and concern. These four are called "immeasurable" (*aparamita*) because a) one wishes that all sentient beings, countless in number, be the recipient of them, and b) the karmic reward of such a wish is immeasurable.**

5. The Gita says a "yogi," one who is cultivating wisdom through self-discipline, should learn to live alone and solitary. Give two practical ways all of us could integrate solitariness into our daily lives.

**Every day, spend at least some time alone, quiet, without interacting with others and without the stimulation of telephones, TV, music, the internet, etc. Secondly, once a month spend a whole day or a weekend in solitary retreat where one does not leave one's home or room and spends the time in meditation, contemplation, and rest.**

6. Delineate the eight points of a proper meditation posture according to Master Kamalashila (ca. 750 A.D.), sometimes called the "eight point posture of the Buddha Vairochana."

**1) Put your legs in a full-lotus or half-lotus position; 2) don't keep your eyes open all the way, or closed all the way; 3) sit up very straight; 4) make your shoulders level: neither higher than the other; 5) make sure your head is neither tilted up nor down; 6) let your teeth and lips stay in their natural, loose position; 7) leave your tongue in a natural position up against the top of your mouth; 8) make your breath completely quiet, and follow it for a count of ten.**

7. The Gita notes that one who wishes to meditate well should live a life of sexual purity (*brahmacarya*). In the Yoga Sutra, sexual purity is also mentioned as one of the five "restraints" (*yamas*) one must cultivate as the foundation for yoga. What are the other four *yamas*?

**The Yoga Sutra says one must cultivate non-violence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), not stealing (*asteya*), and overcoming possessiveness (*aparigraha*) in addition to sexual purity *brahmacarya* as a basis for the subsequent and more advanced practice of yoga.**

8. Explain why the Gita can equate "the highest nirvana" and obtaining union with the guru.

**"Reaching" the guru in the sense of *becoming* or "gaining union" with him or her is to become an Enlightened Being who is, of course, in the "highest nirvana." One's ultimate success at guru yoga is thus the same as the attainment of nirvana or enlightenment itself.**



9. Yoga is described in the Bhagavad Gita 6.16-17 as a life of moderation, a “middle way” between extremes of overeating and fasting, too much and too little sleep, etc. What are the two senses of the term “the middle way” in Buddhism?

**There is first of all the middle way between hedonistic indulgence in sense pleasures and radical asceticism. The Buddha reached enlightenment by pursuing a moderate course between these two extremes. Secondly, in Buddhist philosophy it said that the truth lies between the two extremes of thinking things exist the way they appear (independently, self-existently), on the one hand, and thinking things don't exist at all if they don't exist as they appear on the other.**

10. What are the four kinds of virtuous persons who become devoted to the religious life and the Teacher?

**They are 1) those in distress, 2) those who are driven by intellectual inquiry, 3) those who are seeking their own advantage, and 4) the wise.**

11. Describe “wisdom” according to the Bhagavad Gita, 13.7-11.

**It is the practice of “humility, unpretentiousness, non-violence, patience, sincerity, service to one's teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-restraint, dispassion toward sense objects, the absence of egoism, awareness of the defects of birth, death, old age, sickness, and suffering, detachment, uninvolved with matters pertaining to sons, wife, home, and the like, always even-minded when either wanted or unwanted things occur, unswerving in his devotion to me, with undistracted yoga, frequenting solitary places and disliking crowds of people, persistence in knowing the innermost self, and seeing the point of cultivating wisdom about how things really are.”**

12. Who is the “primordial being from which originally everything came forth,” and how does knowing this help us achieve the final goal of our spiritual practice?

**Everything in our world comes from ourselves. We are the creators of everything we perceive and experience. Truly and deeply knowing that the world is coming from us and not at us is the precondition for eventually reaching the “eternal state” of enlightenment.**