



Name: _____
Date: _____
Grade: _____

THE YOGA OF WISDOM

ANSWER KEY FOR CLASS EIGHT

1. What are the two main divisions of emptiness?

The emptiness of the “person” or self, “me,” and the emptiness of “phenomena” or “mine.”

2. What is the “Sevenfold Reasoning of Chandrakirti” for proving the emptiness of the person.

A person is not his or her parts, nor is he or she other than the parts. The person does not depend on the parts, nor do the parts depend on the person. The person does not possess the parts, nor is the person the mere collection of the parts. And the person is not the shape or outline of the parts.

3. Give the structure of the argument for the “King of Reasoning” meditation for proving that “phenomena” are empty of true existence.

Consider any thing or being. Things and beings are not ultimately or inherently real – they do not exist in and of themselves. For they are interdependent, and exist only in dependence on other things – on their causes and conditions, on their parts, and on a consciousness that imputes or projects them on the basis of their parts.

4. Give the structure of reasoning for Arya Nagarjuna’s “Sliver of Diamond” meditation on the emptiness of causality.

**There is never production,
Anywhere of any thing,
From itself, from others,
From both, or causeless.**

5. What is one way to see the divine everywhere and to see everything in the divine?

One could practice all day long seeing the Teacher’s enlightened activity in every encounter and experience one has. One could think, “What is the Teacher trying to teach me in this situation? What do I need to be learning here?”



6. What is one way to see the divine “as abiding in all beings” as we go through our daily lives?

One can go around all day long and just suppose that every living being one encounters is a full enlightened being trying to help us get enlightened too. And unless you can read minds, there’s no way to prove that every being is *not* already enlightened.

7. If “everything is equally coming from oneself, whether it is suffering or happiness,” whom should we blame when we encounter unwanted things in our lives?

Everything we experience, pleasant or unpleasant, comes from our own past actions. There is no one else to blame for them.

8. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that a practitioner should have his or her mind fixed on their Teacher and totally rely on the Teacher. What is the essential principle of guru yoga that underlies all interaction with the guru?

The essential principle of guru yoga is that the guru is an Enlightened Being. Therefore everything the guru does or says is a teaching by an Enlightened Being especially designed to help the student.

9. In the Gita 7.10, Krishna says that he is the “eternal essence of all living beings.” Describe one way in which it can be said that all living beings have an “eternal essence.”

Every living being has the potential for perfection, what is sometimes called the “Buddha nature.” This is the emptiness of any self-nature to the person, which allows for the possibility that each and every living being can (and one day, will) become an enlightened Buddha.

10. The Gita talks about *maya* or illusion. Does illusion mean that the things and beings in our world don’t exist? If not, what does it mean?

To say that things are “illusory” does not necessarily mean that they don’t exist at all. Rather, it means that they don’t exist the way they seem to: independently, self-existent, apart from our projections of them.

11. How many non-existent things exist? How many non-existent things do we ordinarily *believe* exist? Give one example of the latter.



No non-existent things exist. A “non-existent things” means it does not exist. We do, however, ordinarily believe in the existence of many non-existing things (and our *ideas* of these non-existing things do exist). One of these might be an irritating person who exists as an irritating person essentially or from their own side.

12. Describe what might be meant by saying that “everything, animate and inanimate, arises from the conjunction of the field and the knower of the field.”

Everything (animate and inanimate) exists only interdependently. The “field” or the objects in our world, and the “knower of the field” or the subject mind that knows these objects, are mutually interdependent: one cannot exist without the other. Objects and subjects “arise in conjunction” with each other, and neither exists independently.

13. The Gita says that the “supreme self” is eternal, changeless, without qualities and without a beginning. What is one way of understanding the “supreme self” and why couldn’t it be some kind of omnipotent creator god?

The “supreme self” depicted here is ultimate reality itself, which is quite different from everything in “deceptive reality” or the world of appearances and forms. A changeless thing like the “supreme self” (or God conceptualized as eternal and changeless) could not be a creator of anything without changing. Furthermore, a changeless thing could not create the changing things of our world without contravening a basic principle of causality: the effect must resemble its cause.