



The Asian Classics Institute



Diamond Mountain University

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### IN-DEPTH COURSE III

## Master Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life Exploring the Border Between You and Me

### Answer Key, Class One

1) For this in-depth course on the practice of exchanging self and others from Master Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, we will be utilizing two important commentaries—one from ancient India, and another from Tibet. Name each of them, their author, and the authors' dates. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks, also add these languages, respectively.)

a) [The Sanskrit commentary is *The Commentary to Difficult Points in the "Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life,"* by Prajnakara Mati (c. 1000 AD)

{Bodhicarya#vata#ra Pan~jika# | Prajn~a#karamati | }

b) [The Tibetan commentary is *Entry Point for Children of the Victorious Buddhas*, by Gyaltsab Je Dharma Rinchen (1364-1432)

{RGYAL SRAS 'JUG NGOGS, RGYAL TSAB RJE DAR MA RIN CHEN,}}

2) The practice of exchanging self and others has a sister practice. Name this practice, and then give four reasons why Master Shantideva teaches the two in the chapter that he does. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks also name the two practices in these languages.)

[The sister practice for the practice of exchanging self and others is the practice of treating yourself and others the same. These are both part of a larger subject on how to engage in the practice of meditative stillness, or *shamatha*. This itself appears in the eighth chapter of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, which is devoted to the fifth of the six perfections: the perfection of deep meditation.

This chapter has three major sections: advice from Master Shantideva on why we should develop the ability to meditate deeply; methods of

**eliminating obstacles to meditative stillness; and finally how to attain this stillness.**

**First of all it is essential to say that meditative stillness is the one and only platform from which we can achieve the direct perception of emptiness. Master Shantideva, and other great teachers such as Master Kamalashila and Je Tsongkapa, teach that the very root of the ability to go into meditative stillness is the Wish for enlightenment (bodhichitta). There are a number of reasons for this; here we'll name four.]**

**(a) [First of all, the ability to meditate deeply is—like all other objects—a projection of the karmic seeds in our mind. Meditative stillness is an extraordinarily high spiritual achievement, and the Wish for enlightenment provides the necessary good karma to see ourselves possess this stillness.]**

**(b) [If we do gain the true desire to reach the diamond body and mind of an angel who can appear on every world to help all beings, then we will automatically be inspired to work hard to attain meditative stillness, knowing that the task of transforming our body and mind requires the direct perception of emptiness, which cannot happen without the meditative platform upon which it is based: that is, meditative stillness.]**

**(c) [Once we begin to make serious progress in obtaining the causes to attain our Angelhood—two of the main causes being meditative stillness itself (*shamatha*), and the extraordinary vision of reality (*vipashyana*)—then we will surely start to attract extraordinary spiritual obstacles. The Wish for enlightenment is famous as an ultimately effective protection against these obstacles.]**

**(d) [The whole purpose of attaining stillness is to achieve our enlightenment. And the whole purpose of attaining enlightenment is to help and serve others. Thus, the most important subject of meditation is love for others.]**

**[The Tibetan and Sanskrit names for the two practices are:**

**Treating yourself and others the same:**

**{BDAG GZHAN MNYAM PA,}**

**{para#tmasamata#}**

**Exchanging self and others:**

**{BDAG GZHAN BRJE BA,}**

**{para#tmaparivartana}]**

3) Describe how Master Prajnakara Mati speaks of which of these two sister practices comes first; then discuss this order a bit.

**[Master Prajnakara Mati makes a point that first we learn to treat ourselves and others the same, and then secondly we learn to exchange ourselves and others. Treating each other the same means understanding how others want happiness, and want to avoid pain, just the same as I do. Exchanging myself and others can mean learning to be “selfish” for someone else, hoping that they will get all the good things and I will get none. It would almost seem that the first cannot be perfected until we overcome the “selfishness” of the second.]**

4) As Master Shantideva begins to explain what it means to treat oneself and others the same, the “other guy” makes the objection that we could never learn to think of all the many different kinds of living beings there are as being “me.” Explain how the Master counters this objection, quoting the appropriate verse. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks in these languages.)

**[Master Shantideva compares the multitude of living beings to the different parts of our own body: hands, feet, and the rest. Even though the hand is nothing like the foot, we learn to think of them and the rest of our body as a single unit, a community which constitutes a single interest: “me.” As such we can just as well learn to think of all living beings, despite how different they are all, as a single entity: “me.”**

The relevant verse is:

**There are many separate parts, the hands  
And all the rest, but we dearly care  
For them all, as a single body.  
Just so shall I work for the happiness of every different being,  
Treating all as equal, all as one,  
Thinking of their joy and pain as if it were my own.**

**{LAG PA LA SOGS DBYE BA RNAM MANG YANG,  
,YONGS SU BSRUNG BYA'I LUS SU GCIG PA LTAR,  
,DE BZHIN 'GRO BA THA DAD BDE SDUG DAG  
,THAMS CAD BDAG BZHIN BDE BA 'DOD MNYAM GCIG ,}**

**{hastàdibhedena bahuprakàraḥ  
kàyo yathaikaḥ paripàlanāyaḥ &  
tathà jagadbhinnamabhinnaduḥkha-  
sukhàtmakau sarvamidaü tathaiva }]**

5) Perhaps the most common objection to the idea that I should treat others as I treat myself is the idea that, since someone else’s pain does not directly hurt me, then I must

naturally find myself unable to care for them in the same way that I care for myself. How does Master Shantideva answer this objection?

**[It is true that the pain of others does not hurt me directly; but that is only "me" as I conceive of myself at present. Once I learn to expand my idea of "me" to every other living being, then their pain will hurt me as much as "my" pain hurts me now.]**

6) State the logical proof that Master Shantideva presents to demonstrate that we must work to remove the suffering of others. (Tibetan and Sanskrit in these languages.)

**[Consider the pain of other living beings.  
It is something that I should stop;  
Because it is suffering.  
It is, for example, like the suffering that I experience myself.]**

**{SEMS CAN GZHAN GYI SDUG BSNAL CHOS CAN,  
BDAG GIS BSAL BAR RIGS TE,  
SDUG BSNAL YIN PA'I PHYIR,  
DPER NA BDAG GI SDUG BSNAL BZHIN NO,}**

**The Sanskrit is reconstructed:**

**{anyadu:kham dharmi |  
maya# hantavyam yujyate |  
du:khatva#t |  
a#tmadu:khavat | }**