



The Asian Classics Institute



Diamond Mountain University

Name:
Date:
Location:
Track:
Grade:

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 Two

1) Several verses here in the section on exchanging self and others contain a high spiritual principle which has been a cornerstone of the teachings of His Holiness the current Dalai Lama. State that principle.

[Myself and all other living beings are exactly the same in wanting happiness, and in not wanting pain. Therefore it is completely proper that I should work equally to obtain happiness for myself and all others, and equally to remove my own and all other people's pain.]

2) Now give the two verses in which Master Shantideva originally expresses this principle. (Sanskrit and Tibetan track in these languages.)

**[Given the fact that both myself
And others are exactly the same
In wanting happiness,
What difference could there ever be
Between us, what reason that I work
Only for happiness for myself?**

**{,GANG TSE BDAG DANG GZHAN GNYI GA
,BDE BA 'DOD DU MTSUNGS PA LA,
,BDAG DANG KHYAD PAR CI YOD NA,
,GANG PHYIR BDAG GCIG BDE BAR BRTZON,}**

**{yadà mama pareùàü ca tulyameva sukhaü priyam &
tadàtmanap ko vi÷eùo yenàtraiva sukhodyamaḥ}**

**Given the fact that both myself
And others are exactly the same
In not wanting pain,
What difference could there ever be
Between us, what reason that I protect
Myself and not all others?**

{,GANG TSE BDAG DANG GZHAN GNYI GA
,SDUG BSNAL MI 'DOD MTSUNGS PA LA,
,BDAG DANG KHYAD PAR CI YOD NA,
,GANG PHYIR GZHAN MIN BDAG SRUNG BYED,}

{yadà mama pareùäü ca bhayaü dupkhaü ca na priyam &
tadätmanap ko vi÷eüo yattaü raküàmi netaram}

3) At this point, the “other guy” returns again with the objection that, since other people’s pain doesn’t hurt me, then it’s not something that I have to stop. Master Shantideva first counters this objection with an idea about how we consider ourselves over time. Explain.

[Master Shantideva says that, if we are only concerned about our own pain and not others’, then logically we should not be concerned about our own future pain. In one way, he’s talking about problems we might have this evening, or else when we have grown old. In another sense he’s referring to how real dharma practitioners avoid doing bad karma in this life because they know how they will suffer from it in their future life. This shows that we consider our future selves ourselves, expanding our sense of who “I” am to something beyond my immediate self. By this same logic, we should be able to expand “me” to others, and seek to avoid the suffering of this new, bigger “me.”]

4) Master Shantideva then uses an argument based not on how we view ourselves over time, but rather as parts, in the present moment. Explain.

[We not only extend the border of “me” to our future selves, but to many different individual parts of ourselves even in the present moment. For example, our hand will pull a thorn out of our foot, even though the thorn is not hurting the hand.]

5) At this point in the verses, the “other guy” defends himself by saying that he takes care of “himself” in whichever way he happens to think of “himself.” How does this set him up for the practice of exchanging self and others?

[He is admitting that the definition of “me” is a fluid thing, which we define from our own side; it is not something innately fixed, for example, as something that ends at my skin. This prepares him mentally for the idea of extending the border of “me” to include other people, as a conscious decision.]

6) Master Shantideva next says that, since “me” is like a string of beads, or an army, then there’s no sense in trying to take care of “me.” Explain his logic.

[The string of beads here stands for “me” over a number of days or years: I take the “me” of many separate moments and think of them all together as “me” over a period of time, in the way that we call a handful of beads on a string a “rosary.” The army here stands for “me” in the moment: I take my arms and legs and torso and head; lump them all together; and call it “me”—in the same way a large number of individual soldiers are thought of as an army. We’ve said already that how many things I lump together and think of as “me” at any given time is something I can make a decision about. Ultimately though even this “decision” is not under my control: I constantly define myself, and even decide to change this definition, only so far as the karmic seeds in my mind allow me to. We cannot control, in the present moment, either our happiness or even what “me” is. We can only be good to others, and thereby plant seeds that will bring us happiness, and allow us to care even more for others, in the future.]

7) Explain what the words “that” and “it” in verse 101 here refer to.

[The word “that” here refers to a “me” or a “self”; which is to say, there is no “self” to a suffering being—meaning there is no suffering being that comes from his or her own side. The “it” refers to the suffering or happiness that they would wish to control.]

8) Is there a difference between my pain and other people’s pain?

[We do *perceive* a difference between our pain and other people’s pain, but it’s important to admit that this difference is only *perceived*, and not something which is automatic or natural. Since the difference is only a perception, it can be changed—especially if changing it would bring happiness to all of us.]