



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 Three

1) In the section of the chapter just completed, Master Shantideva has advised the "other guy" that—if he refuses to take care of the needs of others as he does his own needs—then by logic he shouldn't take care of his own needs either. How does the "other guy" respond to this, and what is Master Shantideva's reply?

[The "other guy" says that it makes no sense to "work extra for more pain": to purposely bring myself more trouble by attempting to take care of everyone else's needs the way I do my own. Master Shantideva replies that—if you really think about all the pain going on in the world—then concerning yourself directly with this pain could never feel like a lot of suffering.]

2) Quote the verse in which Master Shantideva introduces the idea of sacrifice. (Sanskrit and Tibetan tracks in these languages.)

[Master Shantideva introduces the idea of sacrifice in the verse:

If a single suffering could act
To stop a great many sufferings,
Then those who have love
Would want nothing else
Than to embrace it, for the sake
Of themselves and others.

{GAL TE SDUG BSNGAL GCIG GIS NI,
,SDUG BSNGAL MANG PO MED 'GYUR NA,
,BRTZE DANG LDAN PAS SDUG BSNGAL DE,
,RANG DANG GZHAN LA BSKYED BYA NYID,}

{bahānāmekaduṣkheṇa yadi duṣkhaḥ vigacchati &
utpādyameva tadduṣkhaḥ sadayena parātmanop //}

3) Why is the idea of sacrificing oneself for others *not* a sacrifice?

[As Master Shantideva says, “we embrace others’ sufferings for the sake of both ourselves and others.” The decision to incur suffering for ourselves in order to remove the sufferings of others is in fact the highest form of good karma; and so it can only bring us ultimate happiness, and is no sacrifice at all.]

4) Master Shantideva refers to the story of the bodhisattva monk called “Lovely Flower of the Moon,” but he doesn’t relate this story to us. Describe what happened to Lovely Flower; give his name in Sanskrit and Tibetan; and give the name of the book in which his story is found.

[The story of the bodhisattva monk “Lovely Flower of the Moon” (Tib: *Metok Dadze* {ME TOG ZLA MDZES}, Skt: *Supushpa Chandra* {*Supus%pacandra*}) is found in found in *The King of Concentration Sutra (Samadhi Raja Sutra)*. In the story, a king named Shuradatta begins to repress the Dharma in his country. Lovely Flower is a teacher in the local monastery; during the repression, he and the other monks escape to the forest. But Lovely Flower cannot bear to think that the people of the country, and of the king’s court, will continue in their wrong view. Although the other monks attempt to stop him, he goes to the court and begins to teach, winning the hearts of many, including the queens of the King. The King then becomes jealous, and orders that Lovely Flower’s eyes be plucked out, and that his ears, nose, hands, legs, and other parts be cut off. The bodhisattva’s dead body blazes in light for days after his death; the King repents, and builds a stupa in his honor. At the end of the story, Lord Buddha reveals that *he himself* was the King, in a former life, and went to the Hell Without Respite for his evil deed. The story of Lovely Flower thus becomes a example throughout the years for sacrificing oneself, as one, in order to remove the pain of the many.]

5) Master Shantideva, at this point, says “Why would you ever want freedom?” What on earth could he mean?

[Master Shantideva is saying that the bliss of serving every other living being is infinitely greater even than the happiness of reaching nirvana—the great pleasure of eliminating one’s own negative thoughts forever. Master Prajnya Akaramati calls this bliss the “ultimate delicious” (*rochok* in Tibetan), and says that bodhisattvas get so wrapped in it that as they achieve enlightenment they hardly any notice. Master Gyaltsab Je says this is true especially once we realize that all other living beings are our own Mother.]

6) Master Shantideva says in a verse here that bodhisattvas “never hope for some karmic reward.” Clarify this statement from both a worldly and an ultimate standpoint.

[Master Prajna Akaramati clarifies this statement in his commentary. It is not the point that we should never hope for a karmic reward in the sense that we cannot hope that the karma of our actions will make us an enlightened being who can serve all other living beings. It is the same even for worldly results of our karma: it's fine to hope and expect money for example from having given money to others, if we intend to use this money to help others.]

7) How does Master Shantideva then summarize the entire section on working to treat others in the same way that we treat ourselves?

[He says that we should learn to empathize with others, and to protect them from things they don't want, to exactly the same degree that we cherish and protect ourselves—even down to making sure that we are not subjected to the slightest unkind word from another person.]