



Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

CULTIVATING JOYFUL EFFORT

HOMEWORK FOR CLASS THREE

1. What are the three kinds of laziness that act as obstacles to our joyful effort, and what is the antidote to each?

a) **The laziness that involves procrastination and idleness (putting off what you know you should be doing, or doing many meaningless activities to avoid what you should be doing). This laziness is due in part to the fact that we have not yet practiced enough to have tasted the fruits or results of a spiritual discipline. The antidote is a regular death awareness meditation.** b) **The laziness of being attached to improper activities, such as those involved in “gain and honor.” This involves “mere hard work” that is not directed toward spiritual ends. As one Lama says, “It is easy to be both extremely busy and lazy at the same time.” The antidote to this form of laziness is to think over and over again about how all such endeavors involve and end in suffering.** c) **The laziness of feeling discouraged, of thinking someone like you could never get enlightened, etc. According to Pabongka Rinpoche, “Each and every of the Buddha’s teachings is an antidote to this kind of laziness.” Specifically, a regular meditation on “leisure and fortune” could serve as an antidote to such discouragement.**

2. What is the “boat” which is “so hard to find again” that one should use “to cross over the great river of suffering”?

This precious human life.

3. Give the Sanskrit terms usually translated as “leisure” and “fortune” and briefly describe what they mean.

The Sanskrit term for “leisure” is *kshana*,” a “moment” in sense of “suitable moment, vacant time, leisure, opportunity.” It also implies that such an opportunity is very brief and could end at any time. The term for “fortune” is *sampatti*, which comes from a verbal form which literally means “to fall together nicely,” or “to turn out well.” We have, in this sense, obtained a life now where conditions have “fallen together nicely” for us.



4. What are the three main parts of a “leisure and fortune” contemplation?

a) Identifying leisure and fortune; b) contemplating the great importance of leisure and fortune; and c) contemplating the difficulty of attaining leisure and fortune.

5. Give the analogy found in the *lam rim* texts to describe how rare and precious this human life is.

The chances of getting a human birth with all the advantages we have are compared to those of a turtle who once every one hundred years comes up from the bottom of the ocean and “just happens” to put its neck through a golden hoop that is floating on the surface of the vast sea.

6. What are the “forces” Master Shantideva says we should assemble to help us combat the obstacles to joyful effort?

“Complete command of yourself, seeing yourself and other people as equal, and finally exchanging yourself and others as well.”

7. According to many commentaries and the *lam rim* texts, there are three kinds of joyful effort. List and briefly describe them, and then briefly discuss a fourth kind of joyful effort that is added by Gyaltsab Je in his commentary on the sixteenth verse of the seventh chapter to the Guide.

a) “Donning the armor,” described as the willingness to suffer and endure, without discouragement, for one’s spiritual goals. It acts as an antidote to impatience. b) “Working effort” or “the effort of collecting virtue,” which involves collecting good karma through the practice of the six perfections and other good deeds. c) “Engaged effort” or “benefiting living beings,” which means whole-heartedly devoting energy and resources to helping others while keeping an altruistic attitude in mind. A fourth kind of joyful effort Gyaltsab Je adds he calls the effort of “self-command” which refers to the ability to get your mind and body to do any virtuous practice you wish.

8. What does Master Shantideva say we should think about if we ever get discouraged, thinking “How could I ever become enlightened?”

He says if even flies, gnats, bees, and worms have the possibility of getting enlightened, how much more so human beings like us if we make the suitable efforts.



9. Give the definition and name the two main types of “Buddha nature.”

The definition of Buddha nature is “that which can turn into a Buddha.” The two main types are the innate Buddha nature and the Buddha nature which requires development. The first turns into the essence body of the Buddha, and the second turns into the mind and the physical bodies of a Buddha.

10. What does Master Shantideva say about our fear and reluctance to put up with pain and hardship for our spiritual goals?

He says that we have suffered many, many pains for countless eons that did not result in enlightenment. We should be willing to put up with the finite number of pains that are entailed in our quest for enlightenment, and that these pains are like those we willingly endure in order to avoid much worse ones.

11. Quote the passage from the fourth chapter the Guide (4.23) that talks about what it would be like to waste an opportunity like the one we’ve received in this life.

नातःपरा वञ्चनास्ति न च मोहोऽस्त्यतःपरः

nātaḥparā vañcanāsti na ca moho'styataḥparaḥ

यदीदृशं क्षणं प्राप्य नाभ्यस्तं कुशलम् मया

yadīdṛśaṁ kṣaṇaṁ prāpya nābhyastaṁ kuśalam mayā

“Having obtained an opportunity such as this one, if I do not use it to practice virtue there is no greater deceit, no greater delusion.”

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes a day thinking about how miraculous your present life is and how you could better take advantage of the opportunities you have to cultivate a spiritual practice.

Meditation dates and times: