



Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

CULTIVATING JOYFUL EFFORT

HOMEWORK FOR CLASS FOUR

1. How does Master Shantideva say it will be possible for us to eventually reach a state of mind where we can happily give away even our own bodies if necessary? And what is the general point regarding our practice that is touched upon here?

He says we should start slow, by learning to give away “vegetables and the like.” Over time, as we’ve grown accustomed to these little acts of charity, it will be possible to “view our bodies just like the vegetables.” The general point is that it is possible to do anything if we start slow and easy and gradually work our way up to higher and higher levels.

2. What are the causes for physical well-being, on the one hand, and mental happiness on the other.

Master Shantideva says that physical well-being comes from meritorious deeds, and mental happiness comes from learning and study.

3. What is the cause of the destruction of “all depression and weariness”?

The wish for enlightenment, the obsessive desire to get out of one’s own suffering as quickly as possible so one can act as the messiah for all other suffering living beings in one’s world.

4. Name the four forces used to smash the things that work against the joyful effort aimed at helping all living beings.

1) “Will” or “aspiration,” the desire to do meritorious deeds. 2) “Steadfastness,” defined as staying fixed in one’s resolution to finish what one has started. 3) “Joy,” being happy to do good deeds. 4) “Leaving off,” or knowing that when one is tired one should take a break.

5. What three things is often meant by “confidence” (in Sanskrit, *mana* or *shraddha*)?

Confidence in one’s teachers, in the Dharma, and in oneself.



6. How long should one be prepared to work for the destruction of one's negative actions "for my own sake and for others."

"Innumerable eons."

7. How can one achieve the one's own goals and the goals of others?

Getting enlightened and becoming a Buddha simultaneously achieves your own goals (the end of your own suffering) and the goals of others in that as a Buddha you are finally in a position to actually help others.

8. How does Master Shantideva characterize the fact that we have obtained this kind of life?

He says it like a miracle to obtain a life like this, and that if we don't use it to develop ourselves spiritually we will have just frivolously used it up.

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes a day thinking about what the wish for enlightenment or *bodhicitta* really would entail, and how you could increase the "powers" of will, steadfastness, joy, and leaving off in your own life.

Meditation dates and times: