



Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

CULTIVATING JOYFUL EFFORT

HOMEWORK FOR CLASS SEVEN

1. Who are the “enemies” that sometimes seem to surround us, and what are the ways in which we can “shield” ourselves from them?

The enemies Master Shantideva speaks about are the mental afflictions. We can protect ourselves from them by cultivating the antidote to each. For example, the antidote to anger is patience; that of envy is loving-kindness and rejoicing in others’ happiness; ill will or malice is countered by compassion, etc.

2. What sort of attitude toward our spiritual work does Master Shantideva say we should cultivate?

He says we should cultivate a joyful attitude like that of children playing a game. We should reach a point where we crave spiritual work and become “insatiable in seeking this work.”

3. While people actually do work hard trying to obtain happiness through worldly pursuits, Master Shantideva says “there’s no certainty that what they do will make them happy. The “problem that life has no certainty” is the first of the six sufferings of a human life. List the other five.

a) The problem that we always want more than we have; b) the problem that we have to keep shucking off bodies, over and over again; c) he problem that we have to keep going into a new life, over and over again; d) the problem that we go up and down in our fortunes in life, over and over again; and e) the problem that no one can come along with us; ultimately we are alone.

4. What is “that single work. . . which makes you happy?”

The spiritual and altruistic activities of a bodhisattva.

5. Relate and explain the metaphor of the razor and the honey.

The honey consists of all the attractive sense objects of this realm ; the razor is the fact that they cannot satisfy us, no matter how much we consume them, and ultimately they lead us to negative deeds that cause more of the circle of suffering.



6. Why is renunciation necessary to escape the cycle of life? What is the relationship between renunciation and the wish to achieve enlightenment for all beings?

Renunciation is the true understanding that everything about your life is suffering. If you don't believe that your life is suffering, you will not try to escape it. Once you have understood how you are suffering, you can think of how others must be suffering the same way. This then leads to the wish to free them from this suffering, and bring them to every happiness.

7. List the eight worldly thoughts.

Being happy when we acquire some thing, and unhappy when we don't. Being happy when we feel good, and unhappy when we don't. Being happy when we become well known, and unhappy when we don't. Being happy when someone speaks well of us, and unhappy when they don't.

8. What is the point at which you know you have developed true renunciation?

When you think day and night of achieving freedom, and no longer have any attraction to the so-called "good" things of this life.

9. What does Master Shantideva say about our tendency to be content with and complacent about our accomplishments?

He says we should never remain content with the merit we have created. Rather, as soon as one task is complete, we should happily immerse ourselves in the next one.

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes a day thinking about the sufferings of this kind of life and how nice it would be to achieve freedom from these sufferings through working hard at one's spiritual practice.

Meditation dates and times: