

## Equalizing and Exchanging Self with Other

Source: *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva, Padmakara Translation Group translation, Shambhala Publications (revised edition 2008). The appendices include Kunzang Pelden's commentary on Shantideva's practice of equalizing and exchanging self and other.

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### Equalizing self with other

Verses 8:90-98 in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*

8:90. Strive at first to meditate  
Upon the sameness of yourself and others.  
In joy and sorrow all are equal;  
Thus be guardian of all, as of yourself.

8:91. The hand and other limbs are many and distinct,  
But all are one—the body to be kept and guarded.  
Likewise, different beings, in their joys and sorrows,  
Are, like me, all one in wanting happiness.

8:92. This pain of mine does not afflict  
Or cause discomfort to another's body,  
And yet this pain is hard for me to bear  
Because I cling and take it for my own.

8:93. And other beings' pain  
I do not feel, and yet,  
Because I take them for myself,  
Their suffering is mine and therefore hard to bear.

8:94. And therefore I'll dispel the pain of others,  
For it is simply pain, just like my own.  
And others I will aid and benefit,  
For they are living beings, like my body.

8:95. Since I and other beings both,  
In wanting happiness, are equal and alike,  
What difference is there to distinguish us,  
That I should strive to have my bliss alone?

8:96. Since I and other beings both,  
In fleeing suffering, are equal and alike,  
What difference is there to distinguish us,  
That I should save myself and not the others?

8:97. Since the pain of others does no harm to me,  
I do not shield myself from it.  
So why to guard against "my" future pain,  
Which does no harm to this, my present "me"?

8:98. To think that "I will have to bear it"  
Is in fact a false idea.  
For that which dies is one thing;  
What is born is something else.

## **Commentary on Equalizing Self and Other**

### **from The Nectar of Manjusri's Speech by Kunzang Pelden**

Source: Appendix 2 in: The Way of The Bodhisattva by Shantideva (Padmakara Translation Group): The following passage is taken from The Nectar of Mañjushrī's Speech, by Kunzang Pelden. It explains stanzas 90 to 98 of chapter 8, giving the metaphysical basis for the meditation on equality of self and other, and thus the whole practice of compassion according to Mahāyāna Buddhism. At the same time it throws interesting light on the teachings on reincarnation and karma (subjects frequently misunderstood), and shows how these are in agreement with the view that neither persons nor things possess an essential core that is solid and unchanging.

[8:90] Two things are to be practiced on the level of relative bodhicitta: meditation on the equality of self and other, and meditation on the exchange of self and other. Without training in the former, the latter is impossible. This is why Shāntideva says that we should first meditate

strenuously on equality of self and other; for without it, a perfectly pure altruistic attitude cannot arise.

All beings, ourselves included, are in exactly the same predicament of wanting to be happy and not wanting to suffer. For this reason we must vigorously train in ways to develop the intention to protect others as much as ourselves, creating happiness and dispelling suffering. We may think that this is impossible, but it isn't.

Although they have no ultimate grounds for doing so, all beings think in terms of "I" and "mine." Because of this, they have a conception of "other," fixated on as something alien—although this too has no basis in reality. Aside from being merely mental imputations, "I" and "other" are totally unreal. They are both illusory. Moreover, when the nonexistence of "I" is realized, the notion of "other" also disappears, for the simple reason that "other" is only posited in relation to the thought of "I." Just as it is impossible to cut the sky in two with a knife, when the space-like quality of egolessness is realized, it is no longer possible to make a separation between "I" and "other," and there arises an attitude of wanting to protect others as oneself and of taking them as one's own. As it is said, "Whoever casts aside the ordinary, trivial view of self, will discover the profound meaning of great Selfhood." Thus, for the realization of the equality of "I" and "other," it is essential to grasp that "I" and "other" are merely labels without any basis in reality. This vital point of egolessness is difficult to understand, difficult even for a person of high intelligence. Thus, as the teachings say, it is of great importance that egolessness be clearly demonstrated and assimilated.

[8:91] The way to reflect upon equality is as follows. We can distinguish the various parts of our bodies: hands, feet, head, inner organs, and so on. Nevertheless, in a moment of danger, we protect them all, not wanting any of them to be hurt, considering that they all form a single body. We think, "This is my body," and we cling to it and protect it as a whole, regarding it as a single entity. In the same way, the whole aggregate of beings in the six realms, who in their different joys and sorrows are all like us in wanting to be happy and not wanting to suffer, should be identified as a single entity, our "I." We should protect them from suffering in just the same way as we now protect ourselves.

Suppose we were to ask someone how many bodies he had. "What are you talking about?" he would reply. "I have nothing but this one body!" "Well," we continue, "are there many bodies that you should take care of?" "No," he will say, "I take care only of this one body of mine." This is what he may say, but the fact is that when he talks about "his body," he is doing no more than applying a name to a collection of different items. The word body does not at all refer to a single indivisible whole. In other words, there is no reason why the name body should be attached here [to these items] and why it is inappropriate to attach it elsewhere. The word body is fastened, without ultimate justification, to what is merely a heap of component items. It is the mind that says "my body," and it is on the basis of this idea of a single entity that it is possible to impute the notions of "I," "mine," and all the rest. To claim, moreover, that it is reasonable to attach the name "I" to "this aggregate," and not to "another aggregate," is quite unfounded. Consequently, it is taught that the name "I" can be applied to the whole collection of suffering

beings. It is possible for the mind to think, “They are myself.” And if, having identified them in this way, it habituates itself to such an orientation, the idea of “I” with regard to other sentient beings will in fact arise, with the result that one will come to care for them as much as one now cares for oneself.

[8: 92] But how is it possible for such an attitude to arise, given that others do not feel my pain, and I do not feel theirs? The meaning of the root text may be interpreted as meaning that, while these sufferings of mine have no effect upon the bodies of other living beings, they are nevertheless the sufferings of my “I.” They are unbearable to me because I cling to them as mine. [8:93] Although the pains of others do not actually befall me, because I am a Bodhisattva and consider others as myself, their pains are mine as well, and are therefore unbearable to me.

How is it that when suffering comes to me, the pain affects only myself and leaves others untouched? In my present incarnation, just as from beginningless time until now, my mind entered amid the generative substances of my parents as they came together. Subsequently, there came into being what I now identify as “my body.” And it is precisely because I seize on it as myself that I am unable to tolerate its being injured. But within suffering itself, there is no separation between “my suffering” and “another’s suffering.” Therefore, although another’s pain does not actually afflict me now, if that other is identified as “I” or “mine,” his or her suffering becomes unbearable to me also. Maitriyogin, the disciple of the Lord Atīsha, did indeed feel the suffering of other beings as his own. This was the experience of one who had attained the Bodhisattva grounds of realization. However, even on the level of ordinary people, we can take the example of a mother who would rather die than that her dear child should fall sick. Because she identifies with her baby, the child’s suffering is actually unbearable for her. Other people who do not identify with the child are for this very reason unaffected by its pain. If they did identify with it, the child’s suffering would be intolerable for them as well.

Moreover, a long period of habituation is not necessary for this kind of experience to occur. Take the example of a horse that is being put up for sale. Right up to the moment when the deal is struck, if the horse lacks grass or water, or if it is ill, or if it has any other discomfort—all this will be unbearable for its owner, while it will not at all affect the client. But as soon as the transaction takes place, it is the buyer who will be unable to stand the horse’s suffering, while the seller will be completely indifferent. Within the horse itself, there is no basis whatsoever for the distinction “this man’s horse” or “that man’s horse.” It is identified as being this man’s or that man’s according to how it is labeled by thought.

In the same way, there is not the slightest reason for saying that the notion of “I” must be applied to me and not to another. “I” and “other” are no more than a matter of conceptual labeling. The “I” of myself is “other” for someone else, and what is “other” for myself is “I” for another. The notions of “here” and “there” are simply points of view, designated by the mind in dependence on each other. There is no such thing as an absolute “here” or an absolute “there.” In just the same way, there is no absolute “I” and no absolute “other.” It is just a matter of imputation. And so, on account of this crucial point, the Dharma teaches that when “I” is ascribed to others,

namely, sentient beings, the attitude of accepting and taking them as one's own will naturally arise.

This is how Buddhas and Bodhisattvas claim sentient beings as their own selves in the way explained above, so that even the slightest pain of others is for them as if their entire body were on fire. And they do not have the slightest hesitation in doing so, just as when the Buddha claimed as his own the swan that Devadatta had shot down with an arrow. Similarly, Machig said that in the centuries after her, perverted practitioners of chöd would with violent means subjugate the wealth-gods, ghosts, and demons, whom she had taken with the crook of her compassion—meaning by this that she had taken these gods and spirits to herself as beings whom she cherished.

As we have said, taking sentient beings as one's own does not require lengthy training. For example, if you tell someone that you will give him an old horse, no sooner are the words out of your mouth than the other person has already appropriated the horse and cannot bear it if the horse is in distress. Still it might be thought that, because one has drifted into such bad mental habits, the thought of taking others as oneself will never arise. But the Lord Buddha has said that in all the world, he never saw anything easier to educate than the mind itself, once it is set on the right path and steps are taken to subjugate it. On the other hand, he also said that there is nothing more difficult to govern than an untrained mind. Therefore, if we do not let our minds stray onto wrong paths but train them, it is perfectly possible to bring them into submission. Conversely, if we fail to subdue our minds, it will be impossible for us to overcome anything else. This is why the teachings say that we should strive to subdue our minds.

[8:94] Shāntideva's justification for the necessity of eliminating suffering is presented in the form of a probative argument. His thesis is that he will eliminate all the sufferings of others, that is, the sufferings that will not bring them any ultimate benefit. His reason is that their suffering does them no good and, by way of example, he says that he will remove it just as he removes his own discomforts of hunger, thirst, and so on. By a similar procedure, he says that he will benefit others and make them happy, because they are living beings, and, once again by way of example, he will do this in the same way that he attends to the comfort of his own body. [8:95] Since there is not the slightest difference between ourselves and others (in that all want to be happy), what reason could we possibly have for not working for the happiness of others? It does not make sense that we should work only in our own interest. [8:96] In the same way, there is not the slightest difference between ourselves and others in that no one wants to experience suffering. Therefore what reason do we have for failing to protect others from suffering? It does not make sense that we should strive only to protect ourselves.

[8:97] Now suppose someone were to object saying, "Yes, I am affected by my own suffering, and therefore I have to protect myself. But when suffering happens to someone else, nothing at that moment is actually hurting me, therefore another's suffering is not something I have to protect myself from." But major and obvious sufferings (from the sufferings of the next life in the hell realms to the pains that will come tomorrow or next month), or the more subtle kinds of suffering occurring from moment to moment—all such discomforts, great or small (due to lack of

food, clothing, or whatever), are located in the future. They are not actually harming us in the present moment. If these future pains are not tormenting us now, what do we have to protect ourselves from? It makes no sense to do so. [98] But we may think that these sufferings are not the same as those of other beings. For even though such sufferings are not affecting us now, we protect ourselves nevertheless because we will experience them in the future. But to cling, on the gross level, to the aggregates of this life and the next life as constituting a single entity, and to cling also, on the subtle level, to the aggregates of one instant and the next as being the same thing, is a mistaken conception, nothing more. When we reflect about our present and future lives in the light of such arguments, [we can see that] the entity that dies and passes out of life is not the same as that which is born in the succeeding existence. Conversely, that which takes birth in the next life, wherever that may be, is not the same thing as that which has perished in the previous existence.

The length of time spent in the human world is the result of past karma. When this is exhausted, as the final moment of the human consciousness ends, it creates the immediate cause [of the new life], while the karma that brings about birth in a hell realm, or whatever, constitutes the cooperative cause. Wherever people are subsequently born, whether in hell or elsewhere, they have at death a human body, whereas at birth, they will have the body of a hell being and so on. In other words, the previous consciousness now terminated is that of a human, while at the moment of the later birth, the consciousness is that of a hell being. The two are thus distinct. When the mind and body of a human come to an end, the mind and body of the following life come into being. It is not that there is a movement or transmigration of something from a former to a subsequent state. As it is said:

Like recitation, flame, and looking glass,  
Or seal or lens, seed, sound, astringent taste,  
The aggregates continue in their seamless course,  
Yet nothing is transferred, and this the wise should know.

When, for example, one uses a lamp to light another lamp, the later flame cannot be lit without dependence on the first; but at the same time, the first flame does not pass into the second one.

If the earlier entity is terminated, however, and the later one arises in such a way that the two are quite separate, it will be objected that, in that case, the effect of former actions is necessarily lost, while (in the course of the subsequent existence) karmic effects will be encountered that have not been accumulated. But this is not so. Phenomenal appearances—which arise ineluctably through the interdependence of causal conditions—cannot withstand analysis,<sup>146</sup> they lie beyond the scope of both the eternalist and nihilist positions. The assertion that karmic effects are not lost is a special feature of the Buddhist teachings. It lies within the exclusive purview of an omniscient mind, and it is thus to be accepted through reliance on the word of the Conqueror.

As it is said:

What arises in dependence on another Is not at all that thing itself—  
But neither is it something else:  
There is no break, there is no permanence.

All we have are relatively imputed terms. While being neither identical nor different, [earlier and later moments of consciousness] appear. Consciousness manifests in different ways according to karma, whether good or bad. But in itself, it consists of moments of mere knowing, clear and cognizant, arising uninterruptedly in like kind. The notions of permanence or discontinuity do not apply to it. Thus the results of karma are not lost, and one never encounters karmic effects that have not been accumulated.

If, on a more subtle level, one considers the momentary nature of phenomena, everything in the outer or inner sphere consists of point-instants. The earlier moment ceases and the later one supervenes so that the one is distinct from the other. Likewise, when the karma for remaining in the human state provides the circumstances, and the final moment of consciousness [in that state] provides the cause, the following moment of consciousness comes to birth and arises in like kind. But the two moments are separate.

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## Exchanging self with other

### **Verses 8:140-154 in The Way of the Bodhisattva**

8:140. Take others—lower, higher, equal—as yourself,  
Identify yourself as “other.”  
Then, without another thought,  
Immerse yourself in envy, pride, and rivalry.

8:141. He’s the center of attention. I am nothing.  
And, unlike him, I’m poor without possessions.  
Everyone looks up to him, despising me,  
All goes well for him; for me there’s only bitterness!

8:142. All I have is sweat and drudgery,  
While he’s there, sitting at his ease.  
He’s great, respected in the world,  
While I’m the underdog, a well-known nobody.

8:143. What! A nobody without distinction?  
Not true! I do have some good qualities.  
Compared with some, he's lower down.  
Compared with some, I do excel!

8:144. My discipline, my understanding have declined,  
But I am helpless, ruled by my defilements.  
As much as he is able, he should cure me.  
I will be submissive even to his punishments.

8:145. The fact is he does nothing of the sort!  
By what right, then, does he belittle me?  
What use, then, are his qualities to me—  
Those qualities of which he's so possessed?

8:146. Indifferent to the plight of living beings,  
Who tread the brink of evil destinies,  
He makes an outward show of virtues,  
And even wants to vie with sages.

8:147. That I might excel, outstripping him—  
Him, regarded as my peer and equal!  
In contests I will certainly secure  
My fame and fortune, public renown.

8:148. By every means I'll advertise  
My gifts to all the world,  
Ensuring that his qualities  
Remain unknown, ignored by everyone.

8:149. My faults I will conceal, dissimulate.  
For I, not he, will be the object of devotion;  
I, not he, will gain possessions and renown,  
I will be the center of attention.

8:150. I will take such satisfaction  
In his evil deeds and degradation.  
I will render him despicable,  
The butt and laughingstock of everyone.

8:151. People say this pitiful nonentity  
Is trying to compete with me!  
But how can he be on a par  
With me, in learning, beauty, wealth, or pedigree?



8:152. Just to hear them talk about my excellence,  
My reputation on the lips of all,  
The thrill of it sends shivers down my spine,  
A pleasure that I bask and revel in!

8:153. Even if he does have something,  
I'm the one he's working for!  
He can keep enough just to survive,  
But with my strength I'll steal the rest away.

8:154. I will wear his happiness away;  
I will always hurt and injure him.  
He's the one who in saṃsāra  
Did me mischiefs by the hundred!

## **Commentary on Exchanging Self and Other**

### **from The Nectar of Manjusri's Speech by Kunzang Pelden**

Source: Appendix 3 in: *The Way of The Bodhisattva* by Shantideva (Padmakara Translation Group): The following passage, also taken from the commentary of Kunzang Pelden, is an explanation of exchanging self and other. A commentary on stanzas 140 to 154 of chapter 8, it explains how one can, by a feat of sympathetic imagination, place oneself in the position of others. In so doing, one gains an appreciation of how one appears in their eyes and of how and why they feel the way they do.

#### **The Exchange of Self and Other [8:140]**

When you perform the meditation of exchange, take other beings, whether inferiors, superiors, or equals, and consider them as yourself, putting yourself in their position. When you have changed places, meditate without allowing any other thought to come in the way. Put yourself in the position of someone worse off than you and allow yourself to feel envy. Then put yourself in the position of someone on the same level and soak yourself in a sense of competitiveness and rivalry. Finally, taking the place of someone better off, allow yourself to feel pride and condescension.

#### **The Practice of Envy from the Point of View of Someone Less Well Off (8:141–146)**

In each of these three meditations [following Shāntideva's lead], whenever the text says "he" or "this person," the reference is to your own "I" (now regarded as another person). When the text says "you," it is referring to this other person (better off, equal, or worse off in relation to

yourself) with whom you have now identified. You must now systematically generate the antidotes to pride, rivalry, and jealousy. The reason for doing this is that as soon as even the slightest virtue appears in the mind-stream, these three defilements follow in its trail. They are like demons that sap one's integrity—which explains the importance given to their antidotes.

Now, of the eight worldly concerns, honor, possessions, adulation, and happiness are the things that make you proud. So perform the exchange, placing yourself in the position of someone contemptible, someone despised, a beggar or tramp. Imagine that you become the poor person and that the poor person becomes you. Now allow yourself to feel that person's envy. [8:141] Looking up at your former self (your ego, now regarded as someone else), someone talented, think how happy "he" must be, praised and respected by all and sundry. You on the other hand are nothing, nobody, a complete down-and-out, despised and utterly miserable. The person you are looking at is rich, has plenty to eat, clothes to wear, money to spend—while you have nothing. He is respected for being learned, talented, well disciplined. You, on the other hand, are dismissed as a fool. He enjoys a wealth of every comfort and happiness; you by contrast are a pauper, your mind weighed down with worries, your body racked with disease, suffering, and the discomforts of heat and cold. [8:142] You have to work like a slave, digging, harvesting grass—while he can just sit back with nothing to do. As these thoughts pass through your mind, feel your envy. He even has servants and a private horse, on whom he inflicts a great deal of discomfort and suffering. He is not even aware that they are in distress, and there he is, oh so comfortable. And as if that weren't enough, he gets angry and lashes out, whipping and beating them. Put yourself in the position of his poor victims and take their suffering on yourself. If you manage to do this, it is said that you will come to recognize their sorrows. Compassion for them will grow and you will stop hurting them.

Once again, reflect that he is talented, of good family, wealthy, and surrounded by friends. You on the other hand are a complete nobody, well known to be good at nothing. [8:143] But, even though you have nothing to show for yourself, you might well ask him what reason he has to be so arrogant. After all, the existence or nonexistence of good qualities and the concepts of high and low are all relative. There are no absolute values. Even people who are low-down like you can be found to have something good about them, relatively speaking. Compared with someone with even greater talent, he is not so great. Compared with someone even more disfavored, feeble with age, lame, blind, and so forth, you are much better-off. After all, you can still walk on your own two feet; you can see with your eyes; you are not yet crippled with age. You have at least something.

This stanza, which begins "What! A nobody without distinction?" could be understood in a different sense, namely, that you have it in you to acquire all the excellence of training, since you have all the qualities of the utterly pure tathāgatagarbha, the essence of Buddhahood, implicit in your nature. Thus you are far from being bereft of good qualities. [8:144] If he retorts that you are despicable because your discipline and understanding are a disgrace, or that you have no resources and so forth, this is not because you are evil in yourself, or that you are just inept; it is because your afflictions of desire, ignorance, avarice, and so on are so powerful that you are helpless. And so you should retort, saying:

All right, if you're such a great and wonderful Bodhisattva, you should help me as much as you can; you should encourage and remedy the poor condition of my discipline, view, and resources. If you do help me, I am even prepared to accept punishment from you—harsh words and beating—just like a child at school learning to read and write who has to take a beating from the teacher. [8:145] But the fact is that you, the great Bodhisattva, are doing nothing for me; you don't even give me a scrap of food or something to drink. So why are you passing yourself off as someone so great? You have no right to look down on me, no right to behave so scornfully to me and to people like me. And anyway, even if you did have any genuine virtues, if you can't give me any relief or help, what use are they to me? They're totally irrelevant.[8:146] After all, if you are a Bodhisattva but can stand by without the slightest intention of helping and saving me and those like me, who through the power of our evil karma are on our way to the lower realms like falling into the mouth of a ferocious beast—if you have no compassion, you are yourself guilty of something completely unspeakable! But not only do you not acknowledge this, you are all the time passing yourself off as someone wonderful. The fact is, however, that you have no qualities at all. In your arrogance, you want to put yourself on the same level as the real Bodhisattvas, those beings who are truly skilled and who in their compassion really do carry the burdens of others. Your behavior is totally outrageous!

This is how to meditate on envy and resentment as the chief antidote to pride. By appreciating the suffering involved in being a poor and insignificant person, without talents or honor, you come to realize how wrong it is to be arrogant and scornful. It dawns on you how unpleasant it is for someone in a humble position when you are proud and supercilious toward them. You should stop behaving like this and begin to treat people with respect, providing them with sustenance and clothing, and working to help them in practical ways.

### **The Practice of Jealous Rivalry from the Point of View of an Equal (8:147–150)**

Next you should make the exchange by taking the place of someone similar to, or slightly better than, yourself—someone with whom you feel competitive, whether in religious or worldly affairs. [8:147] Tell yourself that, however good he is in terms of reputation and wealth, you will do better. Whatever possessions he has, and whatever respect he has in other people's eyes, you will deprive him of them, whether in religious disputation or even by fighting—and you will make sure you get them all for yourself. [8:148] In every way possible, you will advertise far and wide your own spiritual and material gifts, while hushing up whatever talents he has, so that no one will ever see or hear about them. [8:149] At the same time, you will cover up whatever faults you have, hiding them from the public gaze, while at the same time gossiping about all the shortcomings of your rival, making quite sure that everyone knows about them. Under the impression that you are beyond reproach, lots of people will congratulate you, while for him it will be just the opposite. From now on, you will be the wealthy one, the center of attention. For him, there will be nothing. [8:150] For a long time, and with intense satisfaction, you will gloat over the penalties he will have to suffer for breaking his vows of religion, or because he has misbehaved in worldly life. You will make him an object of scorn and derision, and in public

gatherings you will make him despicable in the eyes of others, digging out and exposing all his secret sins.

By using a spirit of rivalry in this way as an antidote to jealousy, you will come to recognize your own faults in being competitive with others. Then you will stop behaving like this and instead do whatever you can to help your rivals with presents and honors.

### **The Practice of Pride from the Point of View of Someone Better-Off (8:151–154)**

Now imagine yourself in the position of someone who is better-off, who looks down on you with pride and derision. [8:151] [And from this vantage point] think that it has come to your notice that he, this tiresome nonentity, is trying to put himself on a par with you. But what comparison could anyone possibly make between you and him—whether in learning or intelligence, in good looks, social class, wealth, and possessions? The whole idea is ridiculous. It's like comparing the earth with the sky! [8:152] Hearing everyone talking about your talents, about all your learning and so on, saying how it sets you apart from such an abject individual, all this is extremely gratifying. The thrill of it is so intense that your skin is covered with goose pimples. You should really enjoy the feeling!

[8:153] If, through his own hard work, and despite the obstacles he has to contend with, he manages to make some headway, you agree that, so long as he abases himself and works subserviently according to your instructions, this low-down wretch will get no more than the merest necessities in return: food to fill his stomach and enough clothes on his back to keep out the wind. But as for any extras, you, being the stronger, will confiscate them and deprive him. [8:154] Every kind of pleasure that this inferior might have, you will undermine, and in addition, you will constantly attack him, piling on all kinds of unpleasantness.

But why are you being so vicious? Because of all the many hundreds of times that this person [your own ego] has harmed you while you were wandering in *saṃsāra*. Or again, this stanza could be explained as meaning that you will wear away the satisfaction of this self-cherishing mentality and constantly undermine it, because this self-centered attitude has brought you suffering so many hundreds of times in the hells and other places of *saṃsāra*. This is how Shāntideva shows the fault of not being rid of pride.

In this way, use this meditation on pride as the principal antidote to jealous resentment. When people who are superior to you behave proudly and insult you with their overweening attitude, you will think to yourself: “Why are these people being so arrogant and offensive?” But instead of being envious and resentful, change places with them. Using the meditation on pride, place yourself in that position of superiority, and ask yourself whether you have the same feelings of pride and condescension. And if you find that you too are proud and condescending and have scorn and contempt for those lower down than yourself, you will be able to look at those who are now behaving arrogantly toward you and think, “Well, yes, I can see why they feel the way they do.” And so you will serve them respectfully, avoiding attitudes of rivalry and contention.