

“At that time, I was intoxicated”:
Buddhist Emotion and the Cultivation of *Bodhicitta* in the First
Four Chapters of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*



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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies

Trinity, 2019

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Introduction: Approaching *Bodhicitta* through Religious Emotion in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

Interpreting *Bodhicitta*

Bodhicitta is a term at the heart of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought and practice, producing additional categories and framing texts and practices. To generate *bodhicitta* is, most basically, to aspire to attain awakening in order to liberate all sentient beings from suffering. In his sweeping study of *bodhicitta*, Dorji Wangchuk argues that Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole boils down to “a form of Buddhism that presupposes that even an ordinary sentient being can generate *bodhicitta* and become a *bodhisattva* or a *buddha*, and advocates that they do so” (Wangchuk 2007, 110). Despite this, “*bodhicitta* has not received much attention among modern scholars.” While Wangchuk and others have gone a long way towards historicizing *bodhicitta* and its attendant categories, its enactment along the path and its subtleties in particular texts remains opaque (Wangchuk 2007, 58; Gómez 2004). Does anything unify the myriad structures for giving rise to *bodhicitta*, the array of attitudes, experiences, practices, and ideas which are said to constitute it? How should we understand the resolve at the center of *bodhicitta*, continuous and powerful enough to overcome the difficulty of the Mahāyāna path?

Even approaching *bodhicitta* as a term involves etymological and conceptual difficulties. The first element of the compound is awakening, *bodhi* (*byang chub*¹ in

¹ The Tibetan translation can be glossed etymologically as purified or cleansed, *byang*, plus *chub*, accomplished, realized, or brought to full expression.

Tibetan, transliterated *pūṭi* 菩提 in Chinese), “from which the word *buddha*” and also Buddhas themselves derive (Williams 2005, 996). *Citta* (*sems*, *xīn* མིན) is a dense and varied concept, a full account of which depends on layered Buddhist models of mind and mental activity across centuries of doctrinal development. It has been almost universally translated as mind, or more narrowly as thought, desire, or resolve (Wangchuk 2007, 70).² A related difficulty surrounds the multiple possible readings of *bodhisattva* (see Kajiyama 1982). Kajiyama discusses the list of meanings for “*sattva*” proposed by Dayal (1932) to argue that two were most important to Mahāyāna Buddhists: *sattva* as a sentient being, and as a synonym for *citta* with the additional sense of purpose or resolve (*abhiprāya*). The Tibetan translation, *byang chub sems dpa'*, incorporates a possible etymology of *sattva* as a hero, one who is bravely resolved. Haribhadra takes the compound as referring to the bodhisattva’s two aims: awakening, and the benefit of sentient beings (Kajiyama 1982, 255). This double direction is essential to *bodhicitta*.

Buddhist literature on *bodhicitta* often centers on the initial resolve to attain Buddhahood, *prathamacittotpāda*. *Cittotpāda* can refer to any resolve to attain a result (Wangchuk 2007, 149), and is thus often qualified as *bodhicittotpāda*. *Bodhicitta* is used to describe attitudes, processes, and also as a synonym for the attainment of awakening itself: “relative” *bodhicitta* for attitudes and actions on the path, and “absolute *bodhicitta*” wherein the “the demarcation between *bodhi*, *citta*, *bodhicitta*, and *buddha* seems to

² This reading centers on what Wangchuk and others have concluded is the earliest valence of the term. The origins of *bodhicitta* and its acquisition of such semantic depth are important questions, implicated as they are in the origins of the Mahāyāna and the history of Buddhist thought in general. However, since this thesis deals with the relatively late *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, composed in the eighth century when *bodhicitta* had become a fully formed category, I will be treating it synchronically. Moreover, a deeper understanding of what *bodhicitta* came to mean to South Asian and Tibetan Buddhists may contribute to the historical question of why its meanings coalesced in the first place.

dissolve” (Wangchuk 2007, 42). *Bodhicitta* is also the “quintessence” of the ritualized commitments of the bodhisattva on the path, the *bodhisattvasaṃvara*, which follow naturally from it and without which it cannot be cultivated or preserved (Wangchuk 2007, 331; Gómez 2004, 55).

The most common scholarly model of *bodhicitta* is as a wish, a “sort of decision,” and thus as a type of mental event (L. Gómez 2004, 54). Buddhist sources also sometimes frame *bodhicitta* in this way, applying complex emic frameworks for mental processes (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 52–54). This is part of the picture, but I am interested here in how *bodhicitta* encompasses many processes, events, and, ultimately, qualities of reality. What happens when we take *citta* seriously as mind, a whole personality composed of habits, thoughts, and actions, and a *bodhisattva* as someone whose entire interiority and purpose is comprised of *bodhicitta*? Scholarship has struggled to unify, on the one hand, *bodhicitta* as a mental state, a decision, intention, or aspiration, and its undeniable emotional components, its role as an affective, religious, and indeed bodily transformation or series of transformations resulting in something so fundamental that it persists across lifetimes (Gómez 2004, 56, Wangchuk 2007, 196–197). As Jay Garfield puts it,

Bodhicitta is a complex psychological phenomenon. It is a standing motivational state with conative and affective dimensions. It centrally involves an altruistic aspiration, grounded in compassion, to cultivate oneself as a moral agent for the benefit of all beings. (Garfield 2012, 334).

The problem is twofold: on the one hand, scholarship lacks robust models for approaching these “affective dimensions.” But much more importantly, scholarship on *bodhicitta*, and Mahāyāna Buddhism more generally, has tended to treat the devotional,

emotional, and ritual aspects of Buddhism and Buddhist texts separately from the intellectual and ethical. These distinctions, carried over from western theories of mind and categories of mental experience, interact in complex ways with Buddhist materials, often with muddling results. We are in need of methods to treat all the pieces of *bodhicitta* in relationship to one another, in order to better understand how, from Buddhist perspectives, resolve relates to compassion, a ritualized orientation towards beings and awakening is stabilized, and the immense array of contemplations and arguments levied in texts to induce *bodhicitta* interact with one another.

Emotion and Affect: Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Categories

A recent explosion of work in philosophy, ethics, psychology, and religious studies has made clear that we are in urgent need of new models for feeling and thought, especially in the study of religion (Corrigan 2004, 4–16). This need stems in part from the particular cultural history of “emotion” as a category. Emotion bears the heavy baggage of a “hydraulic” model, according to which affects and emotions are movements or agitations of the mind that “spring on us from external causes or seize us unbidden,” unruly borderlands around moral cultivation and rational thought (Heim 2008, 22; Corrigan 2004, 13). This framework is often accompanied by a strong distinction between affects or dispositions (as more stable or subtle orientations and habits), and emotions as momentary events. In turn, reason and intellectual argument have been separated from the domains of both habituation and feeling.

Similarly, the category of religion has in part been constituted by an association with the irrational, indescribable, or transcendent, which may be valued positively or

negatively but always manufacture dichotomies. This partitioning of religious concerns and experiences has made it difficult to sustain rigorous historical or hermeneutic approaches to religious emotion and the lived practices of religious people more generally (Orsi 2016, 39–46; Corrigan 2004, 5–6). When “religious experience” has been theorized, the result has often been an acultural and decontextualized black box, a pure subjectivity with little utility or, some scholars have argued, coherence (Sharf 1995; Katz 1978). There is a long history in modern scholarship and popular culture of denying that Buddhism is a religion precisely on the grounds that it is rational, clean of ritual and devotion, and thus deserving of philosophical respectability (Lopez 1995, 6; Stepien 2018). Embedded in this discourse is the argument that Buddhism is opposed to emotions wholesale, or that Buddhism makes use of intense emotions only reluctantly and early on the path towards bland quietude (Marks and Ames 1995, 139–59; Burton 2010, 211–112; Ghose 2000, 167–201).

Both sides of this dichotomy do a disservice to *bodhicitta*, and Buddhism more generally. Even apparently negative experiences of passionate emotion – heartbreaking compassion, existential agitation, terror, grief, and longing have played central roles in Buddhist literature and practice, alongside devotion, profound love, and aesthetic delight (McRae 2012; Brekke 1999). In this thesis, I follow the current scholarship on religious emotion in arguing that reductive distinctions between cognition and affect can be broken down, not by abandoning emotion as a category, but by transforming it in relation to the neglected elements of Buddhist thought that it highlights. What we find when we look at emotion in Buddhist texts defies the boundaries and history of the term, and in doing so provides new approaches to domains of experience like *bodhicitta*.

The most pertinent question at this point may be, why employ etic categories like religion and emotion at all, given the vast categorical and theoretical resources within the tradition? My response to this concern is, firstly, that on the level of scholarship the applicability of emotion and affect to Buddhist materials has been generally denied, or applied at the expense of emic Buddhist discourse. A non-essentializing use of religious emotion as a lens brings into focus aspects of Buddhist texts and practice that are often missed. This is an antidote formulated, not in relation to Buddhism, but in relation to what is missing or distorted in academic understandings of Buddhism. Emotion and affect have immediate purchase as points of emphasis.

This emphasis requires new theoretical tools in part because Buddhist categories for mental experience are either much broader or much narrower than emotion (Heim 2008, 20). This is the second reason for employing emotion as an approach. *Citta*, for example, along with *viññāna*, *cetanā*, and so forth (usually translated as consciousness and volition, respectively) include but cannot be limited to affect. Likewise, the second of the five *skandhas*, components of all experiences, is *vedanā*, feeling or sensation, another broad category that includes simpler instances of what we would recognize as emotion and divides into pleasant, unpleasant, and neither (Heim 2008, 20). *Rasa* and *bhava*, which are central to South Asian literary theory, have their own aesthetic and religious baggage outside Buddhism and also likewise include experiences that exceed emotion (McDaniel 2008). A central Buddhist concern is the distinction between morally virtuous or skillful, *kuśala*, and its opposite, *akuśala* (Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā 2014, 109). The

kleśas, or poisonous emotions,³ of anger, desire, jealousy, pride, and delusion⁴ are treated in Buddhist contexts as upheavals of mind that obscure reality and thus produce all suffering.

Taking the *kleśas* as synonymous with emotion in general has led many scholars to conclude that Buddhism opposes emotion wholesale. However, Maria Heim and others have argued that the relationship between emotion and truth in Buddhism is much closer than it may appear. “The First Noble Truth involves the intuition that we can know the nature of the world directly through our emotions - we know affectively of our fragility and vulnerability in a world that is constantly changing” (Heim 2008, 17). A crucial vehicle for this insight is the cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* or *apramāṇas*, the “four immeasurables:” *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekṣā*, or love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.⁵ Often treated as the necessary precursors to and constituents of *bodhicitta*, the immeasurables, like the poisonous emotions, are deeply connected to Buddhist doctrinal content and models of volition and motivation. As cultivated experiences, they are the intrinsic antidotes to the poisonous emotions and to the misperception of reality as such. As Bhikkunī Dhammadinnā argues,

³ The *kleśas* are often referred to as *viṣa*, poisons (Harris 2017, 332). I favor this translation of *kleśa* over the more literal “affliction” or “defilement,” and the more clinical “negative emotion” (Dreyfus 2002, 40; Goodman 2017, 327), firstly because glossing the *kleśas* as emotions contrasts them with their antidotes and emphasizes their qualities as felt experiences, and secondly to capture their quality as “an almost active force,” which not only afflict oneself but spread to others (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxxvii). I here give the list of five *kleśas*, but they are also commonly referred to as three: *krodha*, *tṛṣṇā*, and *moha*, or anger, thirst, and delusion (Harris 2017, 332).

⁴ Delusion or ignorance (*moha*, *avidyā*) is not, as with the rest of the *kleśas*, straightforwardly an emotion. Its reach encompasses all sorts of cognitive, affective, and even more fundamental qualities of mind. However, I am interested here in the more emotional elements of delusion – stubborn resistance, denial, bewilderment, and so on – which feature heavily in the early chapters of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, as I will discuss below.

⁵ Equanimity, like delusion, is much less at home in the category of emotion than the other members of its list. However, I think approaching equanimity as emotional, if not as an emotion, is warranted by the important point that it involves an active caring for others, rather than passive indifference.

The immeasurables have a liberating role to play in order to weaken the unwholesome capacity for reactivity because (a) they positively develop and strengthen qualities opposite to reactions to sense experience in terms of passion or aversion, thereby contributing to cognitive and emotional reorientation based on wholesomeness, and (b) they slowly undermine the fundamental habit of reactivity, in that their mental cultivation results in a de facto weakening of reactivity and craving with clinging (Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā 2014, 93).

Here, in contrast to the lack of emphasis on tools for emotional change in most Western ethics, “feelings and wishes can be fostered or cultivated” (Gómez 2004, 54). Both the *kleśas* and the immeasurables “spring from deeply seated sources that generate our experience and interpretation of the world,” and are thus intertwined with motivation, perception, and ethical action (Heim 2008, 22).

Why not then approach *bodhicitta* as the combined development of the immeasurables and purification of the *kleśas*? By this account, the Buddhist diagnosis for emotions would be that they are poisons or antidotes, either virtuous or nonvirtuous. This distinction, and these categories, are essential for understanding Buddhist relationships to emotion. However, this straightforward distinction is surrounded by a host of other affective experiences relevant to the cultivation of *bodhicitta* and to Buddhism generally: fear, awe, devotion, reverence, sorrow, urgency, courage, and more. Many of these exceed *vedanā*, have more in common than everything classifiable as *bhava*, and carry a more variable moral valence than the poisons or immeasurables. Most emotional experiences are valued or discouraged in Buddhist discourse depending on their context and effects. As I will show in this thesis, treating all of these together as family resemblances through the lens of religious emotion has purchase in revealing the dynamics of Buddhist thought and practice.

I will focus on the early chapters of one of the most important pieces of Mahāyāna literature on *bodhicitta*, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* or *Entrance to the Practice of Awakening*. I will argue that *bodhicitta* can be productively understood as a complex of affects and habits, built on a series of emotional turns occurring in a particular sequence and strengthened through ritualized repetition. My intention is precisely to disrupt the usual baggage of emotion as a category, and its related separation from intention and thought. This is a question of the “practice of emotional life,” wherein “emotion, steeped in ideas, attitudes, and desires, accordingly is an interpretation of the world and a judgment about it” (Corrigan 2004, 11-13). In service of asking what the affective dimensions of *bodhicitta* are and what role they play in its development, I will translate it here as “the heart of awakening.” Using heart in its abstract sense as a metaphorical center of feeling, perception, and passion captures some otherwise neglected senses of the term. As with all translations, this of course loses many other valences of *citta* as mind, but I employ it as a counterweight. The heart of awakening pervades one’s experience, transforms and inspires action, and embodies Buddhahood itself – a relationship between the attitude and the essential quality far better conjured by “heart” than “mind.”

The Context and Textual History of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is profoundly productive arena in which to ask these questions. In Tibetan Buddhism and in modern scholarship, it has shaped debates on *bodhicitta* more than any other text. One of the most scrutinized, quoted, and translated works in the vast corpus of Buddhist literature, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (hereafter BCA) is the most successful manual on the Mahāyāna path composed in South Asia, although it

probably had many competitors in the great Buddhist monastic universities of the first millennium (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxix). A *śāstra* by genre, the BCA has an unusual first person voice, emotional vividness, and practical orientation: “the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* instructs the reader how to develop certain character traits, affects, and ways of experiencing the world” (Bommarito 2011, 357). On this basis, Amber Carpenter has identified the text as “protreptic,” literally “turning towards,” which “as a genre contains a sense of literature which does not just say something but *does* something,” reorienting its audience “towards a comprehension of reality” (Carpenter 2019, 2).⁶ It is, moreover, a reorientation through and of emotions, constituted by the active interaction of the audience with the author’s voice. Even Lionel Barnett, who removed around 57% of the text in his 1909 translation on the grounds that it was repetitive, scholastic, and uninteresting (Nelson 2016, 412), commented that the BCA is “a lasting monument of true religious emotion” (Lionel Barnett 1909, 35–36). As Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton put it:

The impression remains of a man writing with great sincerity. His work succeeds in evoking strong responses, and we are probably best advised to seek an explanation of why this should be so by examining the way in which many such people read the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Without doubt, most people who are genuinely affected by Śāntideva's work are affected by the sentiments that he expresses there... it has been those who have read his words seeking to apply them to their own experience, enjoying his encouragement, flinching under his castigation, who have responded with the greatest sensitivity to his thoughts and reflections on the Great Work of the Bodhisattva (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xl).

⁶ The article in question is from *Readings of Śāntideva's Guide to Bodhisattva Practice* (Gold and Duckworth 2019); the book is forthcoming and all chapters cited therein have been accessed by me in draft form through the generosity of the authors. Page numbers are thus preliminary and refer to the internal numbering of the chapters as of February 2019.

The many biographies⁷ of the author agree that his most important name was Śāntideva, that he was royalty prior to his renunciation of household life, that he was a devotee of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, and that he was primarily active at Nālandā, “the pre-eminent educational institution of medieval India” (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxviii). There is no exact scholarly consensus on the dating of Śāntideva’s life, but all estimates fall between 650 and 765 C.E. (Clayton 2006, 32–33). Śāntideva is almost universally associated with the Madhyamaka approach to the Mahāyāna (Ruegg 1981, 82–85). From his command of standard Sanskrit grammar and verse, however, and from the wide range of Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions engaged with in the BCA, it is clear that Śāntideva had a cosmopolitan education in a diverse religious environment (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxviii–xxxviii).⁸ Recently, there has been a welcome surge of scholarly interest in the second text attributed to Śāntideva, the *Sikṣāsamuccaya*, or *Training Anthology* (Bendall and Rouse 1971; and a welcome retranslation in Goodman 2016). The *Sikṣāsamuccaya* (hereafter SKS) is an anthology of excerpts from more than a hundred *sūtras*, mostly Mahāyāna (for a full list see Clayton 127–129), framed and punctuated by Śāntideva’s own verses. Paul Harrison’s extensive work on this text has established that original verses comprise much more of the SKS than was previously thought (Harrison 2007, 2009). The relationship between these two texts has been evocatively compared to a professor’s lecture and the corresponding course readings –

⁷ For an overview of these biographies, all of which date to several centuries after the BCA’s composition and, while sharing a core consensus, differ on a number of details, see Clayton 2006, 32–36; Liland 2009, 14–15.

⁸ Although these possibilities have largely been dismissed by modern scholars, a less rigid perspective on South Asian Buddhist sectarian identity makes periodic suggestions that Śāntideva was a tantric practitioner, and at least familiar with *tathāgatagarbha* literature, worth keeping in mind (Clayton 2006, 33; Pettit 1999, 122).

while the BCA contains relatively few explicit references to other texts, Śāntideva uses the SKS to provide a structurally analogous model of the path composed of those references (Harrison 2019).

Moreover, despite the voluminous body of translations and works of secondary scholarship on the BCA, no new critical edition working directly from manuscripts has been published since La Vallée Poussin’s edition of Prajñākaramati’s *Pañjikā*, the most important Sanskrit commentary, in 1914, despite “close to 60 manuscripts of the Sanskrit BCA” alone residing in various collections and as yet unstudied (Liland 2009, 7). In this thesis, I have relied on La Vallée Poussin (1914) for the Sanskrit, supplemented with Minayeff (1889; reproduced in Hara Prasad Śāstri 1894). For the Tibetan, I have relied on the translation as preserved in the Derge bsTan ’gyur (see references). The BCA – 菩提行徑 – was translated into Chinese by Tiān Xīzāi (天息災) in 985 CE, and included in the Taishō Canon (T. 1662 32: 543c18-562a16). Fredrik Liland has digitized all of these sources, noting when La Vallée Poussin and Minayeff diverge, through the TLB project, facilitating side-by-side comparison.⁹

The Chinese text is missing the verses from 2.14 on through chapter four, thus constraining my comparison (see Liland 2009, 37–44). Additionally, while I have examined the relevant portions to the best of my ability, the translation is only loosely connected to the Sanskrit. Although a detailed study of it might shed interesting light on debates about the production process and quality of Song Dynasty translations (Sen 2002; Brough 1964; Bowring 1992), it is essentially a separate text. Nakamura Hajima

⁹ <https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=volume&vid=24#permlink>, accessed through May 2019. Liland has also digitized the BsCA.

attributed the Chinese BCA's almost total lack of influence in East Asia to the "awkwardness of the style" (Nakamura 1980, 288). While scholars such as Tansen Sen have argued that the Song Dynasty translations of Buddhist texts under official auspices failed to impact Chinese Buddhists not because of the quality of translations but because of a wider Chinese turn towards indigenous Buddhist lineages and texts, along with the circumstances of their production as symbols of imperial influence rather than texts for Buddhist communities (Sen 2002), in relation to this particular text, Nakamura was understating his case.

The problem overshadowing all other issues with the BCA's manuscripts is mentioned as far back as the biography by Tibetan polymath Bu-ston (1290-1364). There are two versions of the text, one in 913 verses on which Prajñākaramati based his 10th century commentary and which eventually triumphed as the basis for Tibetan and subsequent translations, and a shorter counterpart (Crosby and Skilton 1996 xli-xlii). The latter is extant only in Tibetan, in the form of three manuscripts from the library at Dunhuang (hereafter BsCA), which were noticed and documented in a series of articles by Saitō Akira (Saitō 1993, 2000, 2018). Although comparison of the versions remains incomplete, and the BsCA has not been translated, Saitō's work demonstrates that they share structure and, largely, content. On this basis, and the scholarly consensus that the BCA and SKS share an author (Clayton 2006 36), Paul Harrison suggests that Śāntideva was in fact the "redactor" of the BsCA, who edited his own earlier composition with further verses (Harrison 2019). Because the chapters examined in this thesis are very similar in the BsCA and BCA (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 11, 24), because the reception of the text has been of the BCA from at least the 10th century onwards, and finally due to

my assessment of the coherence of the text, I will side here with Harrison in treating the three texts as the work of a single author, whom there is no reason to refrain from calling Śāntideva.

Translation, Scholarly Reception, and the Categories of Religion and Philosophy

Although only a few commentaries survive in Sanskrit, Tibetan historiography and translations attest to the immediate influence of the BCA, and in Tibet the text has been the subject of almost constant teaching, translation, and quotation up to the present day.¹⁰ Most of the text's reception has been via translation, first in Tibetan and now via an ever-growing number of modern languages (Gómez 1999). These translations are strongly divided into those with a non-Buddhist (and indeed, in the cases of the early translations, anti-Buddhist) philological bent and those aimed at practitioners (L. Gómez 1999; Nelson 2016). In particular, the translation from Tibetan by the Padmakara Translation Group (2006) is in meter for ease of recitation and memorization (Melis 2005)

Despite the historical importance of the text, and the voluminous scholarly literature devoted to it, “detailed analysis of the content of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* has been wanting” (Nelson 2016, 426). Modern scholarship on the BCA displays a remarkable range of emphases, analysis, and conclusion. These assessments are heavily correlated with the categories and interpretive methods scholars have applied to the text. Paul Williams is representative of both ends of the scale, devoting a seventy page

¹⁰For a full discussion of the various Tibetan and Sanskrit commentaries on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, their contents and textual history, see Liland 2009, 19-20. Notable modern commentaries include Dalai Lama 1997, 2009; Gyatso 1997; Chödrön 2005.

philosophical polemic to arguing that Śāntideva “destroyed the bodhisattva path” (Williams 1998, 104–176) and elsewhere praising effusively “the depth and spiritual profundity of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*” as a practical guide to that path (Crosby and Skilton 1996, vii-xxi). Despite the abundance of “expressed admiration for the poetical beauty” of the text (Gómez 1999, 267), literary analysis is scant: the BCA has been overwhelmingly studied for philosophical or ethical content via short excerpts. Crosby and Skilton refer to the BCA’s “plainly didactic material” and relatively simple language to argue that “this text is modest in its poetic aspirations by the standards of Sanskrit *kāvya*” (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxxix). Sonam Kachru, however, comments that Śāntideva’s “use of language is never idle,” and that the text retains its distance from the standards of *kāvya* for deliberate aesthetic reasons (Kachru 2019).

The structure of the BCA has also been the subject of scholarly contention. The BCA is neither a treatise on the Bodhisattva *bhūmis* or stages nor a rigidly structured exposition of the *pāramitās*, the perfections (Clayton 2006, 95). Nor are the bodhisattva commitments dealt with in any systematic way. I argue in keeping with the Tibetan commentarial tradition that apparent incongruities are resolved when we recognize that not only is *bodhicitta* the topic and thematic heart of the text (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxix), it also dictates the BCA’s structure, and other frameworks have been shaped to accommodate it. Tibetan commentaries treat this unattributed verse as a concise structural outline: “the precious, supreme heart of awakening: may it be born in those without it, wherever it has arisen may it not degenerate, and may it always grow greater and

greater.”¹¹ As mKhan po Kun bzang dPal ldan explains in his influential nineteenth century commentary, the first three chapters deal with the generation of *bodhicitta*, 4-6 with maintaining it, and 7-9 with deepening it (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 38-39).

The majority of modern scholarship on the BCA has not prioritized *bodhicitta* as a framework for approaching the text. Applying the category of philosophy to the BCA, and interpreting it through methods common to the western analytic tradition, such studies have focused mostly on chapters 8 and 9, with occasional forays into the issues surrounding anger and patience raised in chapter 6. One strand of this approach has treated the BCA as a work of Mādhyamaka philosophy, reading it, as many South Asian and Tibetan commentators did, for its approach to the nature of reality.¹² Śāntideva’s work has also proven fruitful ground for an extended debate on which, if any, Western philosophical models of ethics apply to Buddhism.¹³

Jay Garfield says of ethical doxography on the BCA that “each of these readings, I fear, is a symptom of a dangerous hermeneutic temptation to force Buddhist ethics into a Western mould, and while each reading reflects something of the content of Śāntideva’s approach, each misses the heart of the matter,” which, Garfield goes on to argue, is *bodhicitta* (Garfield 2012, 335). He represents a growing consensus that Buddhist ethics, and Buddhist texts, are best understood within the famous disease, diagnosis, prognosis, and cure structure of the Four Noble Truths, as therapeutic and thus “protreptic” literature

¹¹ *byang chub sems mchog rin po che l ma skyes pa rnam skyé gyur cig l skyes pa nyams pa med pa yang l gong nas gong du ’phel bar shog* (Tibetan from Wangchuk 2007, 333; he notes that the authorship of the verse is disputed).

¹² Excellent examples are Cowherds 2010; Westerhoff 2016; Sweet 1977; see also the controversial Williams 1998 and subsequent responses; Siderits 2000; Clayton 2001; Pettit 1999.

¹³ Clayton 2006; Cowherds 2015; Garfield 2012, 2015; Goodman 2009; Harris 2015; Lele 2015, 2013; Roy 2011; and several forthcoming articles in Gold and Duckworth 2019, to list only a few.

requiring a careful attentiveness to form and audience (Harris 2015, 268; Garfield 2012, 356; Carpenter 2019). In dialogue with these approaches to the BCA as a guide to Buddhist affective cultivation and a window onto emotion in Buddhism,¹⁴ this thesis will endeavor to move beyond the study of single emotions or categories of experience in order to ask how *bodhicitta* in the BCA works through the text and on the audience.

¹⁴ For studies of particular emotions that focus on the BCA or use it as an example of larger Buddhist frameworks, see Bommarito 2011; Brekke 1999; Burton 2010; Jenkins 1999; Lele 2013; Haskett's study of confession deals heavily with the BCA - Haskett 2010; and Francis Brassard's study of bodhicitta deserves comment as a rare book-length discussion but in fact contains startlingly little comment on bodhicitta's affective qualities and rarely close-reads passages of the BCA - Brassard 2000.

1. Disease: Beginning the Path by Praising *Bodhicitta*

Author, Audience, and Buddhist Reading in the Opening Verses

Homage to the Buddha! Before the Sugatas, endowed with the *dharmakāya*,¹⁵ together with their children and all those worthy of praise, I throw myself down in reverence. Concisely and according to tradition, I will describe entering the commitments of the children of the Sugatas. Everything here has been said before, and I have no skill at composing. Therefore I haven't thought about the benefit of others: I did this to transform my own mind. Through this, the shock of my clear faith in practicing virtue increases. So if someone else with the very same nature as me sees this, it will therefore be of benefit to him.¹⁶

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Sikṣāsamuccaya* both begin with these verses¹⁷ – they indicate the topic, purpose, and intention of the texts (*abhidheya*, *prayojana*, and *abhiprāya*: see Nance 2012). Modern scholarship in general has in general glossed over these verses, considering them conventional (Harrison 2019, 6). However, if we are to follow Amber Carpenter's advice and map how the BCA works protreptically to enact its series of “minor and local revisionings” by which *bodhicitta* is produced and, eventually, awakening attained, it is necessary to ask both where Śāntideva and his readers begin, and how we are being reoriented at each turn (Carpenter 2019, 4–20). Attention of this

¹⁵ The Tibetan *chos kyi sku mnga* interprets the prefix “sa” in *sadharmakāya* as *mnga*, endowed with.

¹⁶ Om namo buddhāya || sugatān sasutān sadharmakāyān praṇipatyādarato 'khilāṃś ca vandyān | sugatātmajasamvarāvatāraṃ kathayisyāmi yathāgamaṃ samāsāt ||1.1|| na hi kiṃcid apūrvam atra vācyaṃ na ca saṃgrathanakauśalaṃ mamāsti | ata eva na me parārthacintā svamano bhāvayitum kṛtaṃ mayedam ||1.2|| mama tāvad anena yāti vṛddhiṃ kuśalaṃ bhāvayitum prasādavegaḥ | atha matsamadhātur eva paśyed aparo 'py enam ato 'pi sārthako 'yam ||1.3|| La Vallée Poussin, following Prajñākaramati and the SKS, has “vāsāyitum kṛtaṃ mamedam.” However, I follow Minayeff and also many other manuscripts (Liland 2009, 82–83), as well as the Chinese and Tibetan (*bsgom phyir*, in order to visualize or familiarize oneself with, and 觀察).

¹⁷ All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. I have, however, relied heavily on the excellent translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (Lionel D. Barnett 1909), looking additionally at Padmakara Translation Group 2006, Wallace and Wallace 1997, and Gómez 2015.

kind “may help us to educate our imaginations” (Hallisey and Hansen 1996, 311) to see better what Śāntideva and his audiences saw.

As mKhan po Kun bzang dPal ldan (hereafter Khenpo Kunpal) puts it, the first verse has significant functions: “first, to dispel obstacles to the completion of his work; second, to inspire those who come after him with perfect confidence in the text, so that they will have faith and will gain a keen interest in its message, and third, to remove hindrances to the successful transmission and reception of his work” (34). Khenpo Kunpal assumes that Śāntideva, as a first person authorial presence within the text and as the historical scholar who composed it, is singular, knowable, and sincere, and that the ritual, intellectual, and affective consequences of his words follow predictable patterns. As Kristin Scheible has pointed out, Buddhist texts seek to “engender certain reading strategies and emotional consequences” in their model readers.¹⁸ Although Śāntideva as an authorial voice and the model reader he exhorts do not map straightforwardly onto historical persons, prescriptive texts are a window onto the “feeling rules of a culture,” which can be both analyzed and learned (Corrigan 2004, 18).

Within those rules, what Śāntideva says in verse 1.2 is far from a routine expression of humility: it is quite shocking. Asserting his lack of skill or originality, he says he has not thought or worried about (*cintā*) the needs or benefit of others (*parārtha*), but just about habituating *svamano*, his own mind.¹⁹ Throughout Mahāyāna literature,

¹⁸ Employing Umberto Eco’s use of the term to describe a “possible reader... supposedly able to deal interpretively with the expressions in the same way the author deals generatively with them.” The “competence” of the model reader is also created by the text (Eco 1979; Ohnuma 2007, 34). Although I use “reader” interchangeably with “audience” here and throughout, and Śāntideva refers to the BCA being seen (*paśyed*), this text has just as often been taught orally, or recited ritually (Lele 2007, 35–36).

¹⁹ The Tibetan, “de phyir gzhan don bsam pa bdag la med / rang gi yid la bsgom phyir ngas ’di brtsams” (1.2) is just as strong: “I didn’t have the thought of other’s benefit; I wrote this to develop my mind.” The Chinese exemplifies the ambiguity and unrelatedness of that translation; 此說無有未曾有 亦非自我而獨

parārtha (Tib. *gzhan don*) is the paramount goal of the bodhisattva, as opposed to *svārtha*, self-interest. This is clearly a deliberate contravention of expectations. If we consider the affective weight of the veneration and trust most of the BCA’s historical audiences have had for it – given the text’s canonical status in Tibet – then would be uncomfortable and unsustainable to take this as an actual declaration of self-interest: a devout audience presumes Śāntideva’s *bodhicitta*. Kunzang Palden’s sees Śāntideva as “self-effacing” here, engaged in a practice of humility targeted at his own conceit and “intellectual pride,” since “on the peak of pride, the water of good qualities does not stay” (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 36–37). From this perspective, the verse performs an exemplary self-awareness of the difference between one’s intention and one’s capacity: trying to change others is not always a skillful or realistic way of acting on the desire to benefit them.

On the other hand, if we take Śāntideva’s biographies at all seriously, he was not a famous or well-regarded person at the time the BCA was composed. At the very least, he was one voice among many at Nālandā, addressing an audience of equals (including, given the extended discussion of monastic competitiveness in chapter six, status-conscious and ambitious rivals). Facing such an audience – primed to measure his poetry by the standards of *kāvya*, reluctant to accept censure, skeptical of his right to teach them – Śāntideva might have intended to startle them into listening. To avoid them mistaking his compassion for pity or condescension, as Prajñākaramati puts it, Śāntideva protests: “I don’t even have the concept that this is suitable to benefit others.”²⁰

專 / 我無自他如是時 乃自思惟觀察作。 “This discourse of mind has nothing exceptional, and it is not the case that I did this by myself. When I was thus without [notions of] myself and others, I did it by thinking and examining on my own” (*Pūtí xíng jīng* 菩提行經 T 1662 p. 543c27-28).

²⁰ *parārthopadyuktamidam bhavati vikalpo ‘pi me nāsti* (La Vallée Poussin 1914, 7 line 20).

This move allows him to create a different relationship between himself and his reader: instead of a voice of authority, Śāntideva invites the audience to take his voice as their own. The second and third verses introduce Śāntideva as a “lyric persona,” the means by which, as Sonam Kachru argues, he constitutes his ideal reader. Kachru highlights Śāntideva’s pervasive use of the first person, coupled with his “sustained and directed use” of apostrophe, turning to address another, as possibly unique in Sanskrit lyric (Kachru 2019, 8–10). “The capacity at issue in the fact that others can enter into the Guide, taking up its first-person perspective and voices as their own, increasingly becomes an explicit and thematic focus,” an “experientially consequential imaginative exercise” that “serves also as the tacit dramatic conceit of the work” (Kachru 2019, 8-10). What Śāntideva articulates in himself and thus prompts in his readers is, moreover, an explicitly emotional transformation: the increase of the shock or rush²¹ of his faith and confidence, *prasādvēgaḥ* (Tib. *dad pa’i shugs*, taking *prasāda* straightforwardly as faith, synonymous with *śraddha*).

Recognizing Disease: The Lightning Flash of Renunciation

But who is this audience? Given the evidence that Śāntideva did compose the BCA in a great Buddhist monastic university, and based on internal clues in the BCA and SKS, we can surmise that they were well-educated monks familiar with Mahāyāna literature who had either not taken the bodhisattva vow or were felt by Śāntideva to be in

²¹ Gregory Schopen notes a similar use of *vega* in the *Vajracchedikā: dharmapramegana*, through the “shock of the doctrine.” This is an “articulation of a particular kind of ‘emotively’ charged experience... a kind of shock-induced realization as a reaction to a certain form of doctrinal expression” (Schopen 1989, 133)

need of some reminding (Harrison 2019, 18; Lele 2007, 37). Many were beginners, “*śikṣārambhakas*,” who were nevertheless already “ardent Buddhist[s] with a good practical appreciation of basic Buddhist tenets and practice, such as morality and renunciation” (Cowherds 2015, 106; Williams 2005, 998). However, beings “with the very same nature”²² as Śāntideva include, with a characteristically Buddhist pairing of the local and the universal, both “the scholars at Nālandā” and “all sentient beings” (Kunbzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 22). The answer to the question of where we begin in the BCA is not primarily one of social identity, education, or experience with Dharma, but of a shared situation in *saṃsāra*.

This becomes clear in verses 1.4-5: “This fortunate moment is so difficult to find: when found, it is a means to fulfill the needs of humankind. If this opportunity is disregarded now, how will it ever come again? As at night a lightning flash illuminates the blinding darkness thick with clouds for one bright, clear moment, so sometimes the worldly mind can turn to merit for a moment, empowered by the Buddha.”²³ Metaphors are central to the articulation and enactment of Buddhist practice: more than simple re-articulations of meaning, they “require your active participation in what is tantamount to world creation” (Scheible 2016, 11). The path of the BCA begins, not with any immediate transformation of the worldly mind, but with an act of recognition and

²² Although I have tried to preserve some of the interesting senses of “*dhātu*” in Sanskrit by rendering it as “nature,” it is worth noting that the Tibetan translators took what Śāntideva is sharing with his readers as *skal ba*, fate, share, or allotment: in other words, the particulars of personality and circumstance in cyclic existence.

²³ *kṣaṇasampad iyaṃ sudurlabhā pratilabdā puruṣārthasādhanaḥ | yadi nātra vicintyate hitaṃ punar apy eṣa samāgamaḥ kutaḥ ||1.4|| rātrau yathā meghaghanāndhakāre vidyut kṣaṇaṃ darśayati prakāśam | buddhānubhāvena tathā kadācīl lokasya puṇyeṣu matiḥ kṣaṇaṃ syāt ||1.5||* The Tibetan has an even stronger sense for lokasya, worldly, as ‘*jig rten*’, literally a disintegrating support: thus 1.5, “the mind might sometimes turn for a moment from the mortal world to consider merit, by means of the Buddha” (*de bzhin sangs rgyas mthu yis brgya lam na ’jig rten bsod nams blo gros thang ’ga’ ’byung*). The Chinese is only loosely related.

attention: the lightning that reveals, for the first time, the contours and extent of one's obscurations. The metaphor of blinding darkness indicates that at this point on the path, delusion is "not simply the absence of knowledge, but... a denial of what we at a deeper level know to be true, of a troubling knowledge" (Garfield 2012, 348). As Heim argues, a deluded ordinary person, *balapṛthagjana*, is rigidly entrenched in their habits, characterized not only by incorrect views but "a lack of emotional sensitivity" (Heim 2003, 551) Śāntideva thus begins, here, not with an argument that can "float free in an abstract space of reasons," but with a flash of lightning that "must gain traction in a mind replete with dispositions, defenses, and extraordinary capacities for avoiding acknowledgment" (Kachru 2019, 16).

The BCA here is prompting a jarring introspective moment in the reader: a recognition that poisons dominate the mind and are only rarely alleviated by a moment of kindness or contentment. Śāntideva's praise of *bodhicitta* cannot work as intended unless his audience actively feels the "emotional truth" that "none of us will elude the frustrations disappointments, grief, and fear of living in a world that is inherently unstable and impermanent" (Heim 2008, 17). In other words, while many of Śāntideva's subsequent arguments do rely on the idea that "vice feels just *terrible*, and terrible in characteristic ways" (Garfield 2012, 346), he does not presume that his audience experiences things like that already: this is a recognition that has to be induced.

It is significant that this first iteration of the first truth's diagnosis takes the form of a positive opportunity: so as not to discourage his audience, Śāntideva highlights not the darkness pervading our experience but the precious opportunity afforded by noticing it. The ominous overhang of clouds, and the impossibility of stumbling again into such an

opportunity, provoke some shock, concern, and urgency: emotions which are “important clues to our own fragility and vulnerability,” hitherto unseen (Heim 2008, 31). The resulting desire to do something about this situation is paired with a sense of need – after all, the fortunate moment is attributed not only to our own karma but to our reliance on the Buddha, cutting down complacency and priming the audience for the praise of and gratitude for *bodhicitta* which will dominate the chapter.

The Affective Foundation of Praise: Faith and Immeasurability

The next verse makes clear that there is only one way out: only *bodhicitta* is strong enough to counteract the power of *pāpa*, evil and wrongdoing (1.6). This verse begins the extended “praise of the heart of awakening” and those who embody it which continues through verse 36 and gives the chapter its title, “*bodhicittānuśaṃsaḥ*.”²⁴ The overwhelming mood of this chapter from verse seven onward is of course praise, and its attendant affects of awe, gratitude, and the desire to emulate the object of one’s praise (Eckel 1985, 69–70). But I argue that aspiration and devotion in the BCA arise together with, and dependent on, another set of emotions which will also recur and deepen throughout the text. I have already discussed the interest, trust, and urgency established in verses 1-6, and the remainder of the chapter performs praise based upon deepened *śraddha* or faith, *saṃvega*, moral urgency, and a first taste of the immeasurables discussed in the introduction: love, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

²⁴ The Tibetan title is more focused on the content than the act of praise: *byang chub sems kyi phan yon*, the benefits or advantages of *bodhicitta*. The Chinese is *Zan putixin pin* 讚菩提心品 (T 1662 p. 543c24), “praising *bodhicitta*.”

Śāntideva's methods for increasing faith and confidence in his audience are indicative of their presumed background as learned and committed Buddhists. This is made clear by his appeals to canonical texts and the authority of the Buddha (1.7, 1.11, 1.14, 1.20, 1.34). Most centrally, the BCA accords with Mahayāna tradition in contrasting the vast *punya*, or merit, created by *bodhicitta* with the results of other forms of virtue (1.6, 1.21-22, 1.27). The moral causality of *bodhicitta* is different than other virtue: "like a plantain tree, all other virtue sheds its fruit and withers, but the tree of the heart of awakening is unceasingly fruitful: it only creates and is not destroyed."²⁵ This difference is explained in two important ways: in terms of *bodhicitta*'s immeasurability, and in terms of its transformative power.

As Bhikkunī Dhammadinnā argues, the immeasurables as a set of experiences intrinsically break down the distinction between subject and object, responding to the immeasurable accumulation of karma throughout cyclic existence with an equally vast dispersal of ordinary habit (Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā 2014, 90–94). In this chapter Śāntideva prompts an affective experience of immeasurability based on concrete changes of scope, object, and imaginative range. In keeping with the role of large numbers in the Mahāyāna as an aesthetic means to represent vastness without falling into abstraction and thus losing a visceral effect, Śāntideva repeatedly reminds his audience of relatable and ordinary objects of virtue and intention, only to multiply the resulting feelings. The text asks us to compare aspiring to alleviate all beings' headaches (1.21) to "longing to take away the unbounded aches of every single being, and longing to make the qualities of

²⁵ *kadalīva phalaṃ viḥāya yāti kṣayaṃ anyat kuśalaṃ hi sarvaṃ eva | satataṃ phalati kṣayaṃ na yāti prasavaty eva tu bodhicittavṛkṣaḥ ||1.12||*

each one measureless” (1.22).²⁶ Other starting points within ordinary experience are the desire of parents for their children’s happiness, the benevolence of gods, *ṛṣṭ*, and *brahmins* (1.23), our own wishes for happiness and attention to our own needs (1.24-25), making offerings to the Buddhas (1.27), the qualities of friends and holy people (1.30), and those who return favors or contemptuously offer others food but are still honored for their charity (1.31-32).

All of these instances of worldly virtue, particularly ordinary generosity, are then multiplied exponentially, inducing experientially the inconceivability of *bodhicitta* as an attitude. The comparison between a parent’s wish for their children’s well-being and a bodhisattva’s aspiration rests on the fundamental commensurability of the experience. The love and compassion we feel for a few loved ones is the same affective habit that needs to be expanded, but in that expansion, it will also be changed, purified, for instance, of the pride and aggression that often attend caring for some more than others, or the desire for reciprocated attention embedded in limited love. This is the transformative quality of *bodhicitta*. Each immeasurable is an antidote, *vipakṣa*, to a poisonous emotion: both cannot be present in the mind (Harris 2017, 335; Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā 2014, 90).

The Role of the Four Immeasurables in the Praise of *Bodhicitta*

Although Stephen Harris and others have noted that the early chapters of the BCA make heavy use of a “skillful handling of poison,” deliberately directing certain kinds of

²⁶ kim utāpramitaṃ śūlam ekaikasya jihṛṣataḥ | aprameyaguṇaṃ sattvaṃ ekaikaṃ ca cikṛṣataḥ ||1.22|| The Tibetan of the second line is slightly different: *re re’ang yon tan dpag med du / bsgrub par ’dod pa smos ci dgos*; and what need to speak of longing to realize (or accomplish) the measureless qualities of each and every one.

desire and aversion to motivate the beginning practitioner who has little else to “work with,” I argue that characterizing the first chapter as a targeted use of craving or *trṣṇā* does not provide a full picture (Harris 2017, 337). Many scholars have seen in the early chapters of the BCA, and in texts on *bodhicittotpāda* in general, a lack of explicit compassion and altruistic intent, or at the least a circularity to compassion which ensures that “interest in others is the most self-interested perspective possible” (Stephen L. Jenkins 2015, 143; Sparham 1992, 227–28). But a closer attention to the affective logic of this chapter, and those to come, reveals that Śāntideva’s praise of *bodhicitta* makes use of common means for inciting all four immeasurables, and that the act of refuge on which the chapter closes presupposes them.

Samvega, or moral agitation, plays an important role in this chapter. *Samvega* is a directed agitation, a turning away from cyclic existence, as indicated by its Tibetan translation: *kun tu skyo wa*, total disgust or disenchantment. However, nowhere in this chapter does Śāntideva’s voice direct the audience’s attention to their own plight. Instead, verses 4-7 frame this precious opportunity and its fleeting nature as a common condition. The ones who long to find joy and overcome suffering in verse 1.8 are, potentially, anyone, as is the “wretch chained in the prison of existence” (*bhavadārahakabandhano varākaḥ*) transformed by *bodhicitta* in verse 1.9. Those exhorted to take up the heart of awakening are, indeed, all “habitual travelers in the cities of rebirth” (*gatipattanavipravāsaśīlāḥ*, 1.11). We are, all of us, *ajñāsattvaiḥ*, unknowing beings who have failed to take refuge (1.13), and throughout the body of the chapter Śāntideva hardly lets “beings” or “the world” go unmentioned for a single verse.

Each reader is thus placed repeatedly in the company of all other beings, and asserted to share with them a “fundamental similarity of experiences (the desire to be happy, avoid suffering, etc.) and the underlying potential for moral and spiritual development” – the two most important contemplations for developing equanimity in a Tibetan context (McRae 2012, 118). That this all-inclusive attention is constitutive of the very heart Śāntideva is praising becomes clear in the question and answer of verse 1.25: “how does this unprecedented and excellent jewel for beings come to be? It arises in one who is intent on the needs of others as others are not even on their own needs.”²⁷ The affective content of this regard is, as I have discussed, mapped directly onto divine and parental love, as well as friendship, before being boundlessly multiplied.

A mounting series of rhetorical questions affirming the astonishing qualities of *bodhicitta* begins with verse 1.22 runs through verse 1.27. Then the crescendo abruptly drops off, and the text continues as if Śāntideva is remarking, anguished, to himself, or perhaps quietly and imploringly to the audience: “wanting to escape suffering, it is to suffering that they run. Because of delusion, through just wanting happiness, they kill their own happiness as if it was their enemy.”²⁸ This is a clear expression of, and an injunction to, grief and compassion at the plight of beings, to the point that we drop our habitual self-concern and discuss the situation in third person. “Horror and distress at the world” are a fundamental tool for generating compassion in Buddhist texts: compassion is how we automatically feel if we really become “sensitive to the way the world is and how beings fit into it” (Heim 2003, 549-550).

²⁷ *sattvaratnaviśeṣo 'yam apūrvō jāyate katham | yat parārthāśayo 'nyeṣāṃ na svārthe 'py upajāyate ||1.25||*

²⁸ *duḥkham evābhīdhāvanti duḥkhaniḥsaraṇāśayā | sukhecchayaiva saṃmohāt svasukhaṃ ghnanti śatruvat ||1.28||* The first line in Tibetan is *sdug bsngal 'dor 'dod sems yod kyang / sdug bsñal nyid la mngon par rgyug*: the mind of desire rejects suffering, but runs to suffering, making it appear.

Stephen Jenkins is correct that Buddhist models of compassion do not fit a rigid definition of altruism as “self-abnegation,” and that authors such as Śāntideva make very clear that practicing dharma will make one splendid, happy, beloved, and free (Jenkins 2015; Jenkins 1999). As Reiko Ohnuma puts it, “self-interest (*svārtha*) and other-interest (*parārtha*) are mutually intertwined: nothing is more beneficial to one’s own self-interest than to act solely for the interests of others, and conversely, one cannot be effective in furthering the interests of others without paying due attention to the development of oneself” (Ohnuma 2019, 9). But while this may be accurate as an objective statement about the Mahāyāna path, and Buddhist authors do strategically remind their audiences that a bodhisattva universally worshipped and beloved (1.9), I do not think it does justice to the affective reality of the path.

Refuge as the Culmination of Praise: Encountering Bodhisattvas

By the end of the chapter (1.31-36), we are in a position to praise *bodhicitta* directly. The chapter has *made* true that “the only appropriate response to the magnificence of the conception of the Awakening Mind is to go for refuge to those who embody it” (Crosby and Skilton, 36). This second turn is made possible on the basis of our initial backing away from *saṃsāra* as we know it. It involves, fundamentally, an imaginative act: reminded or newly convinced that we are sick, that life is suffering, Śāntideva then describes how things might be different, and indeed have been different for the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The audience can “set forth on the journey to freedom in the very act of imagining an alternative to endless and oppressive confusion” (Cabezón et. al. 1996, 266).

Praise of *bodhicitta* and bodhisattvas serves two purposes: on the one hand, it inculcates an appropriate sense of the value of *bodhicitta* and all people, teachings, and practices associated with it. On the other hand, it makes *bodhicitta* into a practical possibility – housed in bodies and enacted by Buddhas and bodhisattvas, *bodhicitta* cannot remain a pleasant but unrealistic possibility. As Amber Carpenter argues, praise produces the wish to be “like that,” by making what is praised feel accessible and possible, and contrasting it with the world without Bodhisattvas: “a system of traps, fraught with danger” (Carpenter 2019, 10). This refuge is a declaration of intent, a formalization of one’s priorities and an acknowledgment of the intertwined dependence and autonomy Malcom Eckel identifies as characteristic of the Mahāyāna: one needs the Buddhas precisely because one is going to become just like them, and one is going to become just like them by abandoning any other reliance (Eckel 1985, 69–72). The first chapter thus concludes: “I prostrate in adoration to the bodies of those in whom the jewel of that great heart has arisen, towards whom even harm results in happiness: to these mines of happiness, I go for refuge.”²⁹

In this chapter, I have argued that reading the BCA from the perspective of the model reader – a reader responsive to Śāntideva’s “lyric persona” in his performance of responses, images, and resolutions – makes the work of the text visible. The result is not a singular mood of praise or desire, but an affective structure with both sequential and simultaneous components. Having remembered the Buddhas and given rise to interest

²⁹ *teṣāṃ śārīrāṇi namaskaromi yatroditaṃ tad varacittaratnam | yatrāpakāro 'pi sukhānubandhī sukhākarāṃs tāṃ śaraṇaṃ prayāmi ||36||* The term *śārīra* in the plural usually refers to the relics of Buddhas, and the singular to living bodies (Silk 2006, 5–6). However, the Tibetan renders it “sku,” synonymous with *kāya* or body, and Kunzang Palden clearly takes the verse to be discussing living bodhisattvas one might encounter (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 62–64). I have opted for the latter.

and confidence in the text, Śāntideva then invites his audience to collapse their voices with his own, to use his self-addressed reflections to transform themselves. Just as diagnosis reconfigures a previously denied or misunderstood set of symptoms into a coherent whole, Śāntideva's metaphor of the flash of lightning performs the reader's lack of recognition and subsequent illumination. I then argued that Śāntideva builds his praise of *bodhicitta* on a certain set of foundational affects – faith in *bodhicitta*, the moral urgency of universalized *saṃvega* at the plight of beings, and the four immeasurables, framed as exponential multiplications of ordinary forms of care and generosity. In this way, the model reader is primed to feel wonder at the power of *bodhicitta*, a sense of awe and need with regard to its embodiments, and a conviction that no other source of help will do.

2. Diagnosis: Embracing *Bodhicitta* through Ritual

Repetition and the Deepening of Affect in Chapters Two and Three

Your embrace makes me fearless! I will create benefit for beings in cyclic existence. I totally transcend previous wrongdoing – I will not do another wrong again.³⁰

I confess all of that as I stand here in the presence of the protectors, my hands together in reverence, fearing suffering, prostrating again and again. Accept my transgression as transgression, oh guides! It is not good, oh protectors: I will not do it again.³¹

These two passages, from the beginning and end of chapter two, pose an interpretive dilemma. Both invoke the four steps of a widespread ritual framework in South Asia and Tibet for confessing and purifying karma (Wangchuk 2007, 193). Before the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, Śāntideva recognizes and regrets his past action, commits not to repeat them, and is changed in the process (Wangchuk 2007, 355; Clayton 2006, 54). However, in the first verse, delivered in the context of the extensive offering (*pūjā*, Tibetan *mchod*) at the beginning of chapter two, Śāntideva is fearless, and regret appears only by implication as wrongs are bypassed or transcended. In the second, he is overcome by fear, having spent the bulk of the chapter considering, in visceral detail, the evils and suffering of *saṃsāra*.

Why does this framework for confession and purification appear twice in this chapter, in such different contexts and with opposing emotional content? Why is one

³⁰ parigraheṇāsmi bhavatkṛtena nirbhīr bhava sattvahiṭam karomi | pūrvam ca pāpam samatikramāmi
nānyac ca pāpam prakaromi bhūyaḥ ||2.9||

³¹ tatsarvaṃ deśayāmy eṣa nāthānām agrataḥ sthitaḥ | kṛtāñjalir duḥkhabhītaḥ praṇipatya punaḥ punaḥ
||2.65|| atyayam atyayatvena pratigṛhṇantu nāyakāḥ | na bhadrakam idaṃ nāthā na kartavyaṃ punar mayā
||2.66||

instance fearless and the other fearful? The chapters on the “confession of faults” and “embracing the heart of awakening,”³² leading up to *bodhicittotpāda* and the bodhisattva vow in verses 3.22-23, are in fact pervaded by repetition on all levels from the structural to the poetic. Śāntideva circles back again and again to previous themes, affects, and ritual frameworks. Although Buddhist *sūtras* are often repetitive, such circling is unusual in a *śāstra* like the BCA. In this chapter, I will explore the repetitiveness of the BCA as a deliberate rhetorical means for the affective development of *bodhicitta*.

Ritual Emotion and the *Anuttarapūjā*

As many scholars have noted, the first three chapters of the BCA comprise a “well-established liturgical format,” the *anuttarapūjā* or “supreme worship,” composed of at least seven parts in sequence: praise, offering, confession, rejoicing, requesting, prayer, and dedication (*vandanā*, *pūjā*, *pāpa-deśanā*, *anumodanā*, *adhyeṣaṇā*, *yācanā*, and *pariṇāmanā*) with refuge and *bodhicittotpāda* occasionally added (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 10-11). Each of these steps have independent lives as Buddhist ritual acts and virtuous affects. Requesting that the Buddhas not pass into *nirvāṇa*, and praying that they teach, may be rooted in Pāli accounts of Ānanda failing to create the interdependence necessary for the Buddha to live longer (Cabezón 1996, 345–56). Rejoicing is likewise an important source of merit in its own right, the antidote to jealousy and third of the four immeasurables, and of longstanding importance in South Asian Buddhism.

³² *Pāpadeśanā* and *Bodhicittaparigraha*; I treat them together because they form one ritual structure, and indeed are a single chapter (also called *bodhicittaparigraha*) in the BsCA (Crosby and Skilton 1996, xxxiii).

Many Buddhist authors, such as Āryaśūra and Candragomin, composed *anuttarapūjās*, and almost all acts of *mchod pa*, *pūjā*, in Tibetan Buddhism have this structure up to the present day, often making use of verses from the BCA (Makransky 1996, 312–30). The *anuttarapūjā* is also the most common ritual context for *bodhicittotpāda* and taking the bodhisattva vow. Śāntideva’s citations in the SKS along with epigraphic and historical evidence from Nālandā indicate that he was familiar with a number of the canonical precedents for the *anuttarapūjā* (Crosby and Skilton 9-11), particularly the “Bhadracarī,” a pre-fifth century prayer eventually incorporated into the end of the *Gaṇḍavyūha sūtra* (Osto 2010). Crosby and Skilton provide an excellent discussion of the *anuttarapūjā* as a linear sequence, a single affective arc, that is worth quoting in full:

The various elements of the Supreme Worship represent or invoke a sequence of spiritual moods through which the ritual participant is drawn. Despite minor variations in different sources, the sequence of these moods is not arbitrary. One begins with praise (Chapter 1), because this involves reflection upon and appreciation of the virtues of the Awakening Mind. On the basis of this appreciation, one then engages in worship, the active response to what is good, particularly in the form of making offerings to that which is worshipped. Since the Awakening Mind is of incalculable worth, the aspiring Bodhisattva offers everything of value in the universe. A natural extension of this positive response to the Awakening Mind is that one should go to it for refuge (2.26), i.e. commit oneself to its realization. However, the active appreciation and valuation of the Awakening Mind resulting in this act of commitment has a reflexive effect upon the individual, namely the perception of one's own shortcomings. This results in the confession of one's evil, as accumulated in this and previous lives. In part relieved and lightened by this confession, and partly able now to appreciate the good which is achieved by others, one naturally rejoices in their merits. Freed from remorse, and appreciative of others, one can turn one's attention to the teachings of the Buddha which enable one to acquire the Awakening Mind, and so one requests to receive the teaching, indicating one's openness to receive instruction in the Bodhisattva path. At the same time one realizes that the teaching is derived from the Buddhas, and so one begs that they should help

oneself and others. Knowing that these actions are themselves productive of much merit, and also aware that this can form a subtle basis for greed and acquisitiveness, one then gives away, in the fullest Bodhisattva spirit, even this merit, dedicating it to the benefit of all beings. Finally, one strengthens one's resolve so as to encourage the arising of the Awakening Mind (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 12-13).

As a summary of chapters two and three, this passage goes a long way towards mapping the emotional and cognitive turns Śāntideva performs.

However, while Śāntideva praises *bodhicitta* and the bodhisattvas in chapter one, he also does so while making offerings to them in chapter two, and praises *bodhicitta* once more *after* the vow at the end of chapter three. If we broaden our attention to include adjectives and actions within verses, praise and its attendant affects proliferates. Although verses 3.6-21 are certainly a dedication, it they are also an offering – to all sentient beings, rather than the three jewels. In addition to a formal refuge in verse 2.26, Śāntideva takes refuge at the end of chapter one, and again starting in verse 2.48,³³ in a sequence that is usually treated as a single act of refuge but in fact comprises a flurry of surrender and prostration extending to verse 2.53. If we once more broaden our sense of refuge beyond the formal and include every time Śāntideva appeals to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as protectors, offers himself to them, or asserts his status as their dependent, examples multiply. The refuge in 2.26 is, as Crosby and Skilton argue, a response to the positive qualities of the objects of refuge, but the refuges embedded in the confession have a more complex motivation. Rejoicing emerges most fully at the beginning of chapter three, but joy in the virtues of others plays a role in chapter one, as I have argued,

³³ 2.47 in the Tibetan, and according to Prajñākaramati and thus La Vallée Poussin; verse 2.32 (in Minayeff, Liland, and Crosby and Skilton's translation) appears in only some Sanskrit manuscripts. Erring on the side of inclusion, I have followed the latter. The extra verse is very similar to the one that follows it (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 148).

and in the offerings of chapter two. Kunzang Palden sees the bathing scene in chapter two not only as an offering, but as a purification following the brief confession in 2.9 (Kunzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 70–71). In short, the components of the *anuttarapūjā* here stand in a complex interrelationship to one another, to refuge, and to *bodhicittotpāda*. Śāntideva’s parts are standard, but the whole he constructs is not.

The “*samyakpūjā*,” complete worship or offering, from 2.1-22 describes actions, substances, and figures that would have been physically and imaginatively familiar to Śāntideva’s audience. The seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Yi Jing (義淨, 635-713) reported that in many of the monasteries he visited, Buddha images were “bathed in perfumed water, anointed with scented oils, dried with a white cloth, then set up in the temple where offerings of incense and flowers were made,” just as the Buddhas and bodhisattvas are bathed from 2.10-17 (Makransky 1996, 314). The text cues the audience to follow Śāntideva’s lead in vividly visualizing his ritual actions, often punctuating those actions with *eṣa* as emphasis; *karomi eṣa*, now I perform (1.1), *niryātayāmi eṣa*, here I present as gifts (1.6), *snānaṃ karomy eṣa*, now I bathe (1.11).

Why does the preparation for *bodhicittotpāda* draw so heavily on common ritual forms? The study of religious reading and ritual texts has been perennially troubled by questions of authenticity, sincerity, and the alleged inaccessibility of subjective experience in contrast to public action (Bell 2009; see also Robert Sharf’s article “Experience” in Taylor 1998; and “Ritual” in Lopez 2005). These issues are reflected in the division of *bodhicitta* into its “internal, psychological form and its ritual, public form” (L. Gómez 2004, 55). Many traditional scholarly models treat ritual as either a conduit for existing – and troubling – emotions, an avenue for catharsis and control, or as a

scripted performance in which the internal experiences of individual participants are only tangentially relevant (Mahmood 2001, 827–28). However, as Saba Mahmood puts it, “conventional and rule-governed behavior cannot be read simply as a social imposition that constrains the self but rather (under certain conditions) as the means by which the self is realized” (Mahmood 2001, 829). Buddhist texts, like many rituals, often presume emotional and mental states to be relatively universal, reliable, and predictably invoked by conceptual and external cues, thus facilitating emotional change through their enactment (Heim 2003).

Śāntideva relies on the habitual, ritually rehearsed affects of his audience to strengthen the effect of his poetry. As Kunzang Palden reiterates again and again, the correct way to read the text is to respond to it with strong emotion. Discussing the refuge embedded in the confession, he states “If, when making such an invocation, we are not genuinely afraid, we are in effect speaking falsely to the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, who are consequently saddened” (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 109). This also indicates another function of the rituals embedded in this chapter: to render the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas powerfully present as recipients of the offerings and witnesses to the confession and vows. A primed audience has the physical and mental context to expand abbreviated references and react strongly to both subversions and familiar appeals. The BCA presumes that the emotional sensitivity of its audience to Buddhist images and contemplations has been heightened, not dulled, by repetition.

Refuge and Confession as Embedded in Offering: The Fearlessness of *Pūjā*

At the end of the first chapter, Śāntideva has taken refuge in *bodhicitta* and those who embody it (3.36). This is an act of refuge situated in praise, a recognition of *bodhicitta* as the greatest possible expression of the immeasurables. It is, however, still a relatively shallow reorientation. The second chapter thus begins with a statement of purpose: Śāntideva will make an offering to the three jewels, do *pūjā*, in order to *taccittaratnagrahaṇāya*, embrace or grasp “the jewel of that heart” (2.1). Derivatives of the root *grah*, usually translated in this text as grasping, adopting, taking up, or taking possession, play an important role in these chapters.³⁴ I have generally opted for “embrace” to emphasize that Śāntideva is coming to embody, to be integrated with, *bodhicitta*, as well as accepting and understanding it on a conceptual and emotional level, but the connotations of grasping and possession are also strongly present. In these chapters, Śāntideva and the audience become clear about what should be abandoned and left behind – everything usually held on to in *saṃsāra* – and what should be taken up and relied on in its place. Śāntideva is also playing on grasping as the fundamental cognitive and emotional operation of cyclic existence: a beginner cannot operate genuinely outside of the structure of grasping and grasper, and must first reorient to grasp – and be grasped by – virtue.

In chapter one, Śāntideva performed a re-valuation of all worldly virtues and treasures for his audience, even demonstrating the meagerness of ordinary love and

³⁴ The Tibetan terms have a similar valence: the chapter is titled “*byang chub sems kyi yongs su gzung ba*,” totally taking hold of or grasping *bodhicitta*, and *gzung ba* is also used in 1.1, 1.5, and 1.9. In the Chinese verses, I have been unable to locate parallels to these verbs, as their sense is too far removed. The chapter title is *Putixin shi gongyang pin* 菩提心施供養品 (T 1662 p. 544c8), “making an offering to or for *bodhicitta*.”

generosity in comparison to *bodhicitta*. In 2.2-6, Śāntideva goes one step further and mentally gives all those things away to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, who he prays will accept them with great tenderness or compassion (*mahākṛpā* and *thugs rje che rnams kyis*, 2.6). Declaring that he has given to them everything he has to give, Śāntideva then comprehensively offers himself: “I give myself, in all ways and all of me, to the victorious ones and their children. Embrace me, best of beings! Out of devotion, I dedicate myself to your service.”³⁵ In order to embrace or grasp *bodhicitta*, Śāntideva must be embraced or taken possession of by the Buddhas, and let go of avarice towards ordinary objects and himself by giving them all away (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 66).

His own mixed aims and desires set aside, or perhaps taken away, Śāntideva thus confesses and leaves behind his negative karma in the context of giving himself as a gift – promising to totally transcend, leave behind (*samatikramāmi*, *yang dag 'da' bgyid*) all negative actions and be an instrument for the goals of the Buddhas (2.9). This posture is a fearless one because it is fundamentally irrelevant to the speaker’s knowledge, capacity, and aims, since one is now in the Buddha’s hands. In keeping with the sometimes heedless quality of gift-giving in Buddhist literature (see Ohnuma 2007), the important point is absorption in the act, the moment, of giving. That is also, however, why this turn does not stick as long as the subsequent confession does. Transcending wrongs does not yet indicate a deep reckoning with and purification of negative karma. The effect of the beauty and abundance here is almost to break Śāntideva’s poetic voice out of himself –

³⁵ *dadāmi cātmanam ahaṃ jinebhyaḥ sarveṇa sarvaṃ ca tadātmajebhyaḥ | parigrahaṃ me kurutāgrasattvāḥ yuṣmāsu dāsatvaṃ upaimi bhaktyā ||2.8||* In Tibetan, *parigrahaṃ me* is *translated bdag ni yongs bzhes shig*, with an imperative: “please accept me completely!” The Tibetan translation also consistently takes *ātman* to refer to one’s body, *lus*, specifically.

Kunzang Palden remarks of these offerings that “such thoughts exceed the mind’s imagination” (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 75).

The sense of having been ecstatically transported, oriented totally away from oneself in cyclic existence and towards the qualities of beings at the end of the path, continues up to the second refuge in 2.25-26. These verses drip with sensory details, not only visual but olfactory, auditory, and tangible, invoking Buddhist discourses on the perfect awakened body (Ohnuma 2019). As John Makransky puts it, in *pūjā* “no meditator is ever actually alone” (Makransky 1996, 319). The Buddhas are intimately present for Śāntideva and his audience, here – “the bodies of all the Indras among sages blaze with radiance, like gold that has been thoroughly refined, purified, and polished,”³⁶ and he is imitating not just what the Buddhas have done but what the bodhisattvas are still doing (2.22). Kunzang Palden argues that this act of placing oneself in the company of the assembly of bodhisattvas transforms one’s social identity. “It is *they* who are our true companions,” not the people we are accustomed to relate to, embedded in *saṃsāra*. (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 92). To declare one’s total reliance on the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha in 2.26 is, thus, a logical progression from delighted absorption in their beauty and the beauty of what one has offered to them. Much more visceral and all-encompassing than the refuge in 1.36, Śāntideva still has not fully reckoned with what he is turning away from.

³⁶ sūttaptasūnṛṣṭasudhautahemaprabhojjvalān sarvamunīndrakāyān (2.14).

Refuge, Fear, and Renunciation in the Confession

When the confession begins in 2.27, it is as if Śāntideva suddenly breaks into his own view. The transformative “*self-overhearing*” identified by Sonam Kachru as the BCA’s most unique and powerful poetic tool makes its first significant appearance, and the mood of the text shifts dramatically (Kachru 2019, 8). It is a self-overhearing, however, made possible by the vivid presence of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas carried over from the offering (2.27). The merit of vast offerings and a taste of fearlessness now prompts Śāntideva’s self-exculpatory voice, complete with an almost stark switch back to *anuṣṭubh* meter: “In beginningless cyclic existence and again in this life, the harm I, a dumb animal, have done or caused, and anything I have self-destructively rejoiced in because I was deluded, I confess that transgression, feverish with regret.”³⁷ The pitch of regret mounts in 2.30-31, culminating in a cry: “*katham ca nihsarāmy*” – “and how can I get away?” (2.32-33).³⁸

Many scholars, particularly Christian Haskett in his excellent history of confession in South Asian Buddhism (2010), have identified fear, *bhaya* or *’jigs pa*, as the prevailing emotion in chapter two. Fear in Buddhist thought has a “fundamental double-ness” (Brekke 1999, 442). On the one hand,

Fear is the natural state of saṃsāric existence. The basic facts of life - like birth, sickness, aging and death - cause fear in living beings. Conversely, freedom from fear is an important aspect of complete religious realization. On the other hand, fear is a necessary state of mind in the striving to escape saṃsāric existence and achieve

³⁷ anādimati saṃsāre janmany atraiva vā punaḥ | yan mayā paśunā pāpaṃ kṛtaṃ kāritaṃ eva vā ||28|| yac cānumoditaṃ kiṃcid ātmaghātāya mohataḥ | tad atyayaṃ deśayāmi paścāttāpena tāpitaḥ ||29||

³⁸ 2.32 is absent from the Tibetan, as noted above, and verse 2.33 is markedly different: *bdag ni sdig pa ma byañ bar / śñon du ’gum par ’gyur du mchi / ji ltar ’di las ñas thar bar / myur ba’i tshul gyis bskyab tu gsol*, or roughly: “the wrongdoing I have not purified, that has come to be in all previous death and rebirth, so that I may be liberated from this karma, I pray that you protect me by swift means.”

freedom. Fear should be cultivated as the basic motivating factor in the religious life. Thus, fear is both a negative thing, from which beings should try to escape through religious exertion, and a positive thing, without which the very same exertion is impossible (Brekke 1999, 442).

The crucial difference is between fear that paralyses, or draws one deeper into the poisons, and fear accompanied by the “moral and religious urgency” of *saṃvega* (Heim 2003, 546). Although at a certain point all fear will be eliminated – a permanent return to the fearlessness evoked in the offering section – fear is productive on the path when it is based on insight (Brekke 1999, 447). This is why Śāntideva begins with *moha*, delusion, as the underlying feature of everything he confesses. Thus, “stirring fear and letting go of fear are two essential steps of the same process” (Giustarini 2012, 511).

And yet, the dynamics of this recognition and resulting fear in relation to *bodhicitta* have remained unresolved for scholars. The image of Śāntideva throwing himself at bodhisattva after bodhisattva in terror of future suffering (2.50-54) feels excessive and perhaps even self-centered (Harris 2014, 114; Haskett 2010, 202). There is an apparent gulf between the shame, guilt, terror, and pain of this section, its “emotional unsettling and disturbance,” and the prevailing models of Buddhist emotional life as a process of peaceful altruism and calm tranquility, an end to all kinds of mental movement (Haskett 2010, 198; Ghose 2000, 192). But as in chapter one, a more nuanced look at Buddhist handling of emotion reveals that Śāntideva is directing his audience not towards ourselves but towards everyone’s shared condition. Śāntideva is demonstrating a fear that, rather than narrowing one’s focus towards the self, undermines the very basis of such a focus: the relationships and identity grasped in *saṃsāra*. Although the affective tone is harsh, that harshness is intended “to provoke not anguish but, instead, softness or

sensitivity in beings” (Heim 2003, 548), “to break habits of emotional distancing and indifference” (McRae, 108). As John Dunne points out, it is a mistake to expect extensive descriptions of positive feelings in many Buddhist meditations – rather, “simply by referring to suffering, these verses prime us for [a] kind of spontaneous responsiveness to others’ suffering” (Dunne 2019, 17).

Everything confessed from 2.28-31 applies to everyone. As Haskett points out, “much of what [confessions] have Buddhists confess cannot ever conclusively be connected to the confessant” (Haskett 269). Many verses in this section even eschew Śāntideva’s characteristic first person in describing death and impermanence (2.34, 37, 44, 45, 55, 56). Although Śāntideva’s authorial voice does engage in desperate appeals and panic (2.46-47), the underlying mood here is one of deep sorrow, renunciation, and awareness of the inevitable loss, misery, and futility of life. It is worth taking seriously Kunzang Palden’s argument that the meditation on death and impermanence is, in fact, an integral ritual part of the confession, cultivating the power of regret first and fear secondarily (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 3). Without this regret, all the concerns and partialities of life would continue to interfere with *bodhicitta*. Regret parts us from our past, and fear parts us from the future which will otherwise result from our current actions.

And indeed, it is the ultimate destruction of fear which Śāntideva emphasizes in the confession’s repetition of refuge (2.48-54). In 2.49 and 52, he speaks “*bhāvena*” and “*bhavataḥ*,” passionately or emotionally – from a charged affective state more complex than fear alone. The text also plays with the double meaning of *bhaya* as both fear and danger, the reaction and what is reacted to, also present in the Tibetan ‘*jigs pa*. Verse

2.54, “I have neglected your words; now, because I see my fears, fearful, I go to you for refuge: quickly destroy my fear!”³⁹ is more commonly translated “because I see the danger, fearful, I go to you for refuge: quickly destroy the danger!” It is unproductive to dichotomize these two meanings – between the Buddhas as providing the “non-ethical” protection from danger or the catalyst for ethical transformation (Haskett 2010, 104). The objects of refuge *both* protect in a more ordinary sense, from outer dangers, and from internal dangers including fear itself.

The considerations of this life as a fragile opportunity from 2.55-63 are thus infused with a new sense of resolve. In Buddhist models of confession, “repentance re-creates the world around us,” interrupting the inertia of habit (Haskett 2010, 27-28, 265). Although some scholars have read the prisoner in 2.44 who “sees a different world” (*anyad evekṣate jagat*) as the embodiment of this change in attitude (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 83–91), it is important that this section effects not one different world but two: the prisoner, and then the dying person covered in excrement in 2.45, are seeing a world devoid of refuge, the terror of *saṃsāra* stripped of denial but also shorn of help. Śāntideva clearly considers it essential that we imagine that world as vividly as we can, but then take refuge and commit not to continue down the path leading to that end. In the second change of view, on the basis of the BCA’s third act of refuge “life no longer appears as a field of potential self-fulfillment... Instead it appears suddenly a minefield” (Carpenter 2019, 9). Śāntideva thus resolves: “day and night, I will always engage with just this thought: suffering follows from bad actions. How can I get free of it?”⁴⁰

³⁹ atītya yuṣmadvacanaṃ sāmpratam bhayadarśanāt | śaraṇaṃ yāmi vo bhīto bhayaṃ nāśayata drutam ||2.54||

⁴⁰ iyaṃ eva tu me cintā yuktā rātrin divaṃ sadā | aśubhān niyataṃ duḥkhaṃ niḥsareyaṃ tataḥ katham ||2.63||

To argue that “fear is supposed to motivate the confession” and refuge (Haskett 2010, 103) thus misses the mark in a small but significant way. Śāntideva evokes and dwells in a vivid, urgent terror of suffering throughout this half of the chapter, but it is a fear grounded in deep sorrow and regret, not to mention devotion and the desire to emulate the bodhisattvas. Its force is not self-directed, but rather deepens awareness of universal suffering and destabilizes the ties of value, self-image, and desire that characterize ordinary identity. Kunzang Palden seems to have been concerned that his audience would misunderstand this precise point. In an extensive discussion of refuge, he repeats several times that, while fear is a valuable component of the motivation for liberation, what it means to take refuge out of fear is not “some kind of request or prayer... the true object of refuge for beginners is the Dharma itself – the practice of the Dharma within one’s mind. It is crucial to grasp this essential point... the essence of refuge is a mental pledge,” a commitment to rely on the Dharma and its teachers as a framework for acting in the world (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 83–91).

Conclusion: Rejoicing, Requesting, Dedication, and the Bodhisattva Vow

The two affective complexes I have discussed here – a vivid longing to cultivate the qualities of the three jewels and renunciation of ordinary life in the face of common suffering – come together in the third chapter of the BCA. Having been oriented more and more deeply to value virtue, and accurately perceive the immense comparative merit of Dharma, Śāntideva and the reader can thus “rejoice with delight,” *anumode pramodena* (3.1), and implore the Buddhas to remain and teach on the basis of an imaginatively cultivated appreciation for their presence. In the dedication of 3.6,

Śāntideva begins to articulate in the first person the aspirations he praised in the first chapter. They have moved from being praised outside him to being celebrated as they arise in his mind. This section, from 3.6 to 3.21, is a dedication built on the layers of praise, offering, and attentiveness to the miseries and needs of others I have tracked up to this point. The joy, equanimity of attention, passionate concern for suffering, and aspiration to provide endless acts of care articulated in this chapter bring the four immeasurables explicitly into the text's voice for the first time, as a singular internalized experience. The scope and ambition of this dedication have read as "self-aggrandizing" to some scholars (Ohnuma 2019, 14), while others have bracketed the entire series of aspirations as an exercise "for one's own development" (Lele 2013, 716). But read as the culmination of three chapters of emotional transformation, a more straightforward reading of Śāntideva's *bodhicittotpāda* becomes possible.

With an imaginative capacity expanded by the vast generousities of *pūjā*, and the thought of death still actively disrupting previous parameters of identity and capacity, 3.6-21 read like an impassioned ecstatic utterance. Śāntideva's voice shifts between the present and the optative in this section, sometimes within a verse – in the grip of the four immeasurables, it doesn't matter whether the body is being offered right now or in the future, whether one is now a universal medicine or will become one. Poetically and affectively, Śāntideva is shifting between aspiration and its fulfillment, the capacity he has and the capacity he will strive to attain. This is also an imaginative act – totally oriented towards others, but also pointedly attentive to the only recently disrupted hang-ups of ordinary identity. 3.12-16 are particularly representative of this absolute rejection of the self-centered status quo. "I give this body to embodied beings to do whatever

makes them happy,”⁴¹ 3.12 begins, and proceeds to heap derision and violence upon the offered self. The point is surely not masochism, but a shocking counter the creeping possibility of egotism in the guise of peace and harmony. In the following verses Śāntideva gives his body and reputation away not physically but emotionally – as something for others to grasp. The acts of service and care dedicated to all beings up to this point become increasingly all-encompassing, until in 3.20-21 Śāntideva aspires to support all life like the elements themselves *yāvat sarve na nirvṛtāḥ*, “while all are not yet released.”

The momentum gathered over the course of these three chapters thus, in 3.22 and 23, has propelled Śāntideva and his audience to *bodhicittotpāda*: “just as all the previous Buddhas embraced the heart of awakening, and as they practiced step by step the training of Bodhisattvas, just like that, I now give rise to the heart of awakening for the benefit of the world, and just like that, I will take the steps they took in the practice of that training.”⁴² It is difficult to miss the heavy parallelism, appeal to precedent, and gradual model of cultivation in these verses, which became the standard Tibetan ritual formula for taking the bodhisattva vow (Wangchuk 2007, 177–78). The precise mechanisms of these verses – when precisely the commitments come into effect, whether the *bodhicitta* here is only conventional or also absolute, how total the taking hold is – have been extensively debated in subsequent tradition (Wangchuk 2007, 176-180, Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 131). The nature and content of the sentiment, however, have not. The chapter

⁴¹ *yathā sukhīkṛtāś cātmā mayāyaṃ sarvadehinām* (2.12); I follow Minayeff here, as La Vallée Poussin has “*yaścāsukhīkṛtāś...*” and Liland “*yathāsukhīkṛtāś...*”

⁴² *yathā gṛhītaṃ sugatair bodhicittaṃ purātanaḥ | te bodhisattvaśīkṣāyāṃ ānupūrvyā yathā sthitāḥ ||3.22|| tadvad utpādayāmy eṣa bodhicittaṃ jagaddhite | tadvad eva ca tāḥ śīkṣāḥ śīkṣiṣyāmi yathā kramam ||3.23||*

ends with a final repetition of rejoicing, this time in a tone of wonder, “joy and extreme humbleness,” at the appearance and qualities of *bodhicitta* in oneself (Wangchuk 2007, 136): a by now familiar affective array with a new context.

3. Prescription: Vigilance in Facing the *Kleśas* on the Path

Intoxication, Delusion, and Sobriety: the Interpretive Frame of the Fourth Chapter

I have promised to liberate the poisonous emotions of beings extending throughout space in the ten directions, but I myself am not liberated from poisonous emotions! At that time I was intoxicated, speaking in ignorance of my own capacity. From now on I will always destroy the poisonous emotions, without turning back.⁴³

The fourth chapter of the BCA, *Bodhicittāpramāda*,⁴⁴ is a dramatic change of scene.

From a Tibetan commentarial perspective, the move from chapter three to four is a double shift: from giving rise to *bodhicitta* to maintaining it, and from the perfection of generosity (*dānapāramitā*) to the perfection of moral discipline (*śīlapāramitā*) (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 139–45). The first half of the chapter (4.1-27) brings us back to already trodden ground: the function of fear and shame in Buddhist texts, and the urgency of precious human birth and karmic consequence. In the second half (4.27-48), Śāntideva presents a detailed account of the *kleśas* and the battle against them, relying heavily on an instrumental use of anger to inspire perseverance and resistance (Goodman 2017, 329; Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 160). Most importantly, I will argue that this chapter functions as a frame for both the preceding chapters and the role of emotion in the path to come. In verse 4.41-42 above, we are guided through a double shock: not only does Śāntideva recognize a profound gap between his commitments and capacity, but an

⁴³ daśadigvyomaparyantajagatkleśavimokṣaṇe | pratijñāya madātmāpi na kleśebhyo vimocitaḥ ||4.41||
ātmāpramāṇam ajñātvā bruvann unmattakas tadā | anivartī bhaviṣyāmi tasmāt kleśavadhe sadā ||42||

⁴⁴ Caring for or being careful and vigilant about the heart of awakening. The Tibetan is just *bag yod bstan pa*, carefulness or vigilance about the teachings. Interestingly, in the BsCA this chapter is very similar save for its title, which is *nairātmya*, selflessness or the absence of self (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 24)

equivalent gap between what he felt “at that time” (*tadā, gang tshe*), and what he sees in his mind in this chapter.

Śāntideva’s language here rewards careful consideration: in 4.42, he frames everything he has said up to this point – at the end of chapter three in articulating bodhisattva commitments, but also, I propose, the entire *anuttarapūjā* of the first three chapters – as articulated “*ajñātvā*,” having been ignorant or unknowing. Specifically, he was ignorant of “*ātmapramāṇam*,” of his own capacity (*bdag gi tshod*). Overcome by *bodhicitta* in chapter three, he saw himself as, and promised to become, a perfect source of temporary and ultimate benefit. But in chapter four, that promise seems like “something impulsively begun, something wholly unconsidered.”⁴⁵ Even more strongly, in 4.42 he describes himself as “*unmattaka*.” While I have followed Crosby and Skilton in translating this term as “intoxicated” above, it bears a number of relevant meanings, from distracted to drunk, frantic, or even mad.⁴⁶ This framing was also heavily foreshadowed in the ecstatic and transported language in chapters two and three.

Given that this chapter is about developing *apramāda* – carefulness, care, or vigilance – about *bodhicitta*, and that being *apramāda* instead of *pramāda* – negligent, intoxicated, and unaware – is heavily emphasized in the coming chapters and in Buddhist models for mental cultivation generally (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 139), this begs explanation. If intoxication has characterized the affective complex of *bodhicitta* up until this point in the text, what are we to make of chapter four’s sobriety? What is the

⁴⁵ *sahasā yat samārabdham samyag yad avicāritam* (4.2). *Sahasā* also has the stronger connotations of “forcibly” – which are not entirely inappropriate given Śāntideva’s emphasis on his own powerlessness under the influence of both *bodhicitta* and the *kleśas*. The Tibetan *bab jol*, however, maintains a lighter sense of frivolousness, silliness, and lack of consideration.

⁴⁶ The Tibetan translation favors this last meaning, *smyon pa*, madness or craziness.

relationship between this ignorance and intoxication, in which *bodhicittotpāda* occurred, and the ignorance, delusion, and intoxicating poisonous emotions which comprise the fundamental problems of the Buddhist path, and against which Śāntideva employs all sorts of antidotes in this chapter as well as earlier?

In light of 4.42, we can see that Śāntideva has, throughout the first three chapters, aimed for the affective equivalent of picking up and shaking himself and his audience. Śāntideva's lyric persona has, until the opening of chapter four, been in ritual time, relying on the habits and repetitions of the *anuttarapūjā*'s moods. As J.Z. Smith put it, "ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritualized perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled course of things" (Smith 1982, 63). This performing involves not just doing but feeling – Śāntideva has been feeling the way a bodhisattva ought to, racing ahead of his mind in "the ordinary, uncontrolled course of things," which chapter four represents. Śāntideva's intoxication as a temporary rupture into mental states that will only be stabilized later on the path resonates with the Tibetan reading of the first three chapters as a practice of generosity – perhaps not the *pāramitā* in full form, given the limitations of ignorance Śāntideva describes, but the feelings and habits of giving. In the fourth and fifth chapters, the pertinent perfection is now discipline, a quite different affective space (Garfield 2012, 342–43).

That the text frames its *bodhicittotpāda* as reliant on ignorance and intoxication is in line with Stephen Harris's work on the use of the poisonous emotions in the BCA (2017, 2014). To push further, it is crucial to consider what Śāntideva is ignorant and heedless *of* in the first four chapters. On the one hand, the stages of the *anuttarapūjā*

prompt the audience to see things *more* clearly: the shared predicament of beings, the inevitability of our death and suffering, the qualities of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, the immeasurable merit of *bodhicitta* in comparison to ordinary virtue, and so forth. In discussing the confession, I highlighted its introspective turn towards cyclic existence in contrast to praise and rejoicing. However, as chapter four makes clear, this introspection was, by design, still only partial. Śāntideva simultaneously exposed negative karma in the confession and produced distance from it: we see what we have done wrong only to leave it behind in a few short verses.⁴⁷ The initial metaphor of the flash of lightning in 1.5, the confession in chapter two, and chapter four as a whole can be fruitfully imagined as dipping the reader ever further into the cold water of Buddhist introspection. If in the confession Śāntideva wades in, chapter four is an immersion that verges on drowning, where the poisonous emotions take center stage.

In short, the intoxication of the first three chapters takes the audience out of their minds as a necessary precondition to seeing those minds clearly. Buddhist affective sobriety, the “carefulness, mindfulness, and vigilant introspection” of discipline (Kunbzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 139), are made possible for Śāntideva in the aftermath of overwhelming feeling. The first three chapters are, as a whole, an imaginative leap into emulating the Buddhas and bodhisattvas: the leap is necessary to formulate the vow, to have a taste of *bodhicitta* and enter the vessel of commitments capable of producing the merit to sustain it, but the leap cannot last in a linear way. The intoxication of Śāntideva

⁴⁷ It is interesting to note here the etymological divergence of the terms for confession in Sanskrit and Tibetan; while *deśanā* has the connotation of pointing out or rendering visible, *bshag pa* is related to splitting or cleaving. The former emphasizes the new perspective of both the confessant and their witnesses (the *saṃgha*, visualized or in person), while the latter points to a habitual, emotional, and moral break with previous actions and identity.

is not only fear, renunciation, and regret but also all the positive emotional experiences prompted by the *anuttarapūjā* – devotion, determination to benefit beings, love, compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity.

Although chapter four lacks those moods explicitly, its injunction to vigilance and perseverance is given force by their after-effects. It is significant that verses 4.41-42 are intended, not to shake one's confidence in the authenticity of the realizations and commitments that took place in selective ignorance and intoxication, but to strengthen it. The great nineteenth century *rNying ma* teacher Patrul (*dpal sprul*) Rinpoche compared someone who has taken Vajrayāna vows to “a snake that has crawled inside a length of bamboo” (Patrul Rinpoche 1998, 277). The act of commitment constrains the practitioner's karma to two outcomes: getting through the bamboo tube to liberation or falling back out into hell. Śāntideva's framing of the bodhisattva commitments in this chapter is very similar. Kunzang Palden comments on these verses that Śāntideva “did not have the measure of his own capacity and to make such an ill-considered promise was, to be sure, an act of madness. For it was as if he had promised to save someone while he was himself bound and drowning in the water. But pledges are to be honored nevertheless!” (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 159). Thus the final mood of chapter four turns out to be a sober and vigilant courage.

Failing to Feel Like a Buddhist: Śāntideva's Dialogue with the *Kleśas*

The dichotomized outcome of the path evoked by the metaphor of the snake prompts a similarly bifurcated affective response: one can either be seized by determination to get out the good end of the tube or overcome with panic at the

confinement and doubt that one will escape. Although in the second half of the chapter, from 4.29-48, Śāntideva displays and reinforces the “more positive mood” of the former (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 24), verses 4.1-28 can be fruitfully read as grappling with the latter.

In interpreting the BCA through the lens of its collapse between authorial voice and ideal reader, I have until now left aside the problem of unideal reading. Many scholars read prescriptive texts for a concealed or implicit counternarrative of what was “actually” going on, the unconfessed historical or social possibilities. There is a place for such reading, but emic Buddhist handlings of the gap between religious prescription and description warrant greater theoretical attention (see Carl Bielefeldt’s discussion of “Practice” in Lopez 2005). Here, the topic of the chapter is precisely Śāntideva’s recalcitrance and resistance to “the ideals he has committed to” (Kachru 2019, 18). The BCA is far from unique in incorporating expected failure into its model of the path. As Dorji Wangchuk demonstrates, in Mahāyāna literature “retaining *bodhicitta* is approached as a daunting task full of hurdles. Multiple forces are conceived of as acting against the success of this endeavor... A bodhisattva thus always runs the risk of undermining or losing his *bodhicitta*” (Wangchuk 2007, 333). Only the most exemplary of bodhisattvas retain an irreversible *bodhicitta* or even awaken at the moment of *prathamabodhicittotpāda* (Galloway 1981), with most liable to retrogression until the first *bhūmi* or even the eighth (Wangchuk 2007, 102).

Several scholars have noted the Buddhist interest in “akrasia,” weakness of will or the tendency of people to “act contrary to what they think or know to be best,” and Śāntideva’s particularly strong focus on it (Tillemans 2008, 151; Harris 2014, 113–14;

Garfield 2012, 337–38). As Śāntideva laments in chapter four, “swinging back and forth like this in cyclic existence, now under the sway of errors, now under the sway of the heart of awakening, it takes a long time to gain ground.”⁴⁸ Amber Carpenter comments on this verse that

The mere introduction of new categories, associations and possibilities does not yet stably transform our orientation towards reality, or ensure the sustained effort required to live it consistently over time. Still, the sharp contrast between the two does give us a basis for confidence to undertake the painstaking, piecemeal labour of undoing our default ways of thinking that are incompatible with that perspective. Chapter 4 acknowledges the tension – or rather, the vacillation – between these two perspectives (Carpenter 2019, 10).

Until chapter four, one of these two perspectives is latent. Although Śāntideva does ask himself questions in the course of the confession (2.40, 45–47, 58, 60–63), the text does not break into the full-fledged “argumentation with himself” that marks the later chapters (Tillemans 2008, 152).. However, in the sobriety of *bodhicittāpramāda*, Śāntideva makes space for failure: the text takes on a dialogic quality, between the “voices of depression and idleness” and Śāntideva’s rebuke of them (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 158). 4.2 acknowledges that the vow may have been taken impulsively, *sahasā*, and without thorough consideration. Śāntideva then reminds himself that the Buddhas have thought this through, that he was sure only a moment ago (4.3). He then, apparently in response to the temptation of backing away from his vows, reminds himself that he made a promise to all sentient beings that must be fulfilled (4.4). Canonical precedent on the operation of

⁴⁸ *evam āpattibalato bodhicittabalena ca | dolāyamāṇaḥ saṃsāre bhūmiprāptaś cirāyate ||4.11||*. I have quoted Crosby and Skilton’s translation of this verse, with the slight modification of “heart of awakening”; I find their rendering of this verse’s imagery evocative and hard to improve on, particularly “*bhūmiprāpta*” as “gain ground.” Śāntideva is both referring to the Bodhisattva *bhūmis* or stages, and also playing on the sense of swaying and vacillation in “*dolāyamāṇa*.”

karma is brought to bear as he compares his sudden reluctance to the miserliness of intending to give a gift and then changing one's mind, causing rebirth as a *preta*.⁴⁹ He reminds himself that abandoning *bodhicitta* precludes almost any possibility of liberation (4.7), and the vast stakes of both the merit and the negative consequences of returning to selfishness (4.8-10).

In 4.12-23, he extensively considers the rare and precious opportunity represented by his current circumstances, as first introduced in 1.4. Although shame, urgent fear, and self-consciousness are certainly an aim of these verses (Crosby and Skilton 1996, 23-24), I argue in accordance with Amber Carpenter that these emotions are presented as swiftly propelling Śāntideva into a perspective beyond anxiety or self-concern. The text aims to go beyond terror into a recognition that it is only now, only in the circumstances listed in 4.15-16, that “a mode of being beyond all calculation of selfish pleasures, the complete dedication to the removal of all suffering, is possible. In the light of this possibility, the consideration of our own fears and pains becomes something paltry – inconsequential, when one keeps well in view the great, inspiring goal” (Carpenter 2019, 12). In the face of panic at his new responsibility, fear of the difficulties of the path, and the sneaking suspicion that it could be put off until later, Śāntideva places his own departures from the heart of awakening in the broader context of cyclic existence, and so overcomes them.

The text also engages with the longstanding Mahāyāna theme of despair and discouragement in the face of the path. Acknowledging that all this contemplation of hell and precious human birth may have resulted only in frozen terror, Śāntideva adds “and if

⁴⁹ A reference to the *Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna sūtra*, quoted in the SKS; see Crosby and Skilton 1996, 151.

I am thus aware but, stupefied, sink again into depression, the messengers of death will drive me to more and longer mourning.”⁵⁰ Kunzang Palden elaborates vividly: “he tells himself that the likes of him are unable to practice Dharma... This is how people put an end to their fortunate opportunity in spiritual matters. They put themselves down, thinking that they are stupid and unable to study, telling themselves that they have too much anger, that they are without compassion, that they are distracted and incapable of diligence, and so on,” when in fact their fortunate encounter with this body and the dharma should provide encouragement, alongside the deterrent of the regret they will feel at death (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 153–54). While a lack of self-measurement provided beneficial inspiration in the early chapters, here an inaccurate assessment of oneself as incapable is countered. Despair implies both a stupefied inability to act and a self-centered, short-sighted focus on one’s own apparent flaws.

Poison Antidoting Poison: The Emotional logic of *Saṃsāra*

The turning point of this chapter takes place from a state of failure, having fallen under the power of the *kleśas*: in 4.26-27, Śāntideva asks in desperate frustration how it can be that he recognizes what should be done, knows his current course of action is doomed, but is “led again to those very hells” (*nīye ’haṃ tān eva narakān punaḥ*, 4.26). “Like someone enchanted by spells, I have no will in this. I don’t understand! What is

⁵⁰ *yadi caivaṃ vimṛśyāmi punaḥ sīdāmi mohitaḥ | śociṣyāmi ciraṃ bhūyo yamadūtaiḥ pracoditaḥ ||4.24||*. Both Minaev and La Vallée Poussin have “*vimṛśyāmi*,” to be distressed or put upon, but Liland suggests “*vimṛśyāmi*,” which makes more sense and accords with the Tibetan. Both the Wallaces and Crosby and Skilton appear to have taken this approach; Crosby and Skilton translate the verse with “If I am sensible of this...”

deluding me? Who is here within me?”⁵¹ Thus, where cognitive recognition can go only so far, and volition is absent (*na cetanā*), it is an affective reframing which finally provides a solution. The imagery of the poisonous emotions as marauding, slave-taking enemies (4.28-35), and the practitioner as a tireless warrior on the battlefield (4.36-39), draws on familiar worldly cues for righteousness and determination. In relation to the poisonous emotions, the habit of *saṃsāra* is to identify with them, to believe that they comprise inevitable responses to external objects, to care endlessly for our desires, our hopes, our fears. Śāntideva chides himself for behaving like a servant the *kleśas*, like someone tolerating abuse or kindly serving someone cruel (4.29, 33). Thus in verses 4.28-47, Śāntideva uses repeated questions to make his own emotional landscape unfamiliar, in order to reveal it as a battlefield and a prison (see Carpenter 2019 for a discussion of the same move in chapters five and six). Our ire is roused within the ordinary logic of *saṃsāra*, where it makes no sense to treat enemies well but is reasonable to exert extreme effort in pursuing a livelihood or an enemy (4.39-40).

The contrast with 3.12-16 seems deliberate. Only a short while ago in those verses, Śāntideva directly invited ill-treatment and scorn from beings in order to practice patience and compassion. This is the kind of apparent contradiction in ethical argument which has consistently attracted western philosophical commentary. But this is where interpretive attention to the prompted emotions of the reader, before and after, is so valuable. In 3.12-16, Śāntideva imagines a generosity that obliterates the normal

⁵¹ atra me cetanā nāsti mantrair iva vimohitaḥ | na jāne kena muhyāmi ko ’trāntar mama tiṣṭhati ||4.27|| The Tibetan diverges slightly in the last quarter, making the last question *bdag gi khong na ci zhig yod*, what is inside me? This may explain Khenpo Kunpal’s lack of comment on the personification present in the Sanskrit (Kun-bzang-dpal-ldan 2007, 154–55), where Śāntideva seems to be treating the *kleśas* like the figure of Māra.

boundaries of self-concern, inviting scorn and torment if it pleases others. He thereby makes it emotionally impossible to take the bodhisattva vow with any lingering thought like “well, I’ll do this, but only if it isn’t too much trouble for me.” It is the affective norm of *saṃsāra* to always have one eye on the welfare of oneself and one’s body, and thus Śāntideva prescribes the medicine of a self-abnegating offering. But in chapter four, the target is a different element of habitual perception: “misplaced tolerance” of the poisonous emotions underlying all suffering.⁵² Śāntideva thus promises that he will grasp the *kleśas* “and fight bound to animosity, except against the kind of poisonous emotions resulting in the destruction of poisonous emotion.”⁵³

Conclusion: Introducing Emptiness Through the Poisons

What are we to make of Śāntideva declaring war motivated by vengeance on his own mind? We are still in the domain of sobriety and failure. Left out in the cold, no longer swept up by the vivid presence of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas – who are mentioned in this chapter mostly to note how many of them have come and gone (4.13) – no longer in the first intoxication of *bodhicittotpāda*, Śāntideva trains his mind with the emotional resources available to him: the ordinary reasoning of shame, determination, and anger. The intense emotional pitch and different underlying affects of this chapter are also encoded at a poetic level. Although Śāntideva is in general very fond of short, almost exclamatory sentences, and makes heavy use of first person verbs, in 4.27-29, 4.44, and

⁵² I am quoting here the end of 4.29, “I don’t boil with rage [at the *kleśas*]! What pitiful misplaced tolerance!” (*ahaṃ na kupyāmi dhigasthānasahiṣṇutām*). In Tibetan, *sahiṣṇutām* is translated as *bzod*, the term for the perfection of patience (*kṣāntipāramitā*), making Śāntideva’s contextual use of the poisons even more palpable.

⁵³ *atra grahī bhaviṣyāmi baddhavairāś ca vighrahī | anyatra tadvidhāt kleśāt kleśaghātānubandhinah ||4.43||*

4.46 the rhythm becomes almost staccato, dividing the lines in pieces. He alternates between these clipped sentences and the long, extravagant compounds of 4.36-40: the overall effect is of someone alternately declaiming and interrogating themselves.

But this relative alienation from *bodhicitta* is temporary: there is a crucial turn at the end of chapter four. In 4.45 and 46, Śāntideva begins to ask what exactly his poisonous emotions are, where they can be found, and how they have so much power. Declaring in 4.46 that they are “wretches subdued by the view of wisdom,” *prajñādr̥ṣṭisādhyā varākāḥ*, Śāntideva goes on:

The poisonous emotions are not in the objects of the senses, or in the collection of sense faculties, or in between: they do not abide anywhere else, but they stir up the entire world. This is just illusion! So free yourself from the fear in your heart, devote yourself to striving for wisdom! Why do you torment yourself in hells for no reason?⁵⁴

This verse is a bolt from the blue on many levels. Śāntideva here switches into a much longer meter, and uses the second person for the first time in the BCA, directly addressing both himself and, perhaps, the reader. These stylistic features emphasize this first explicit introduction of the view of emptiness. Śāntideva’s habitual stylistic use of interrogatives is now put to deeper use: the deconstruction which features more and more heavily up to chapter nine on the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*). With the exclamation “this is just illusion!” the whole display of fear collapses, hells are without existing cause, and Śāntideva’s newly sworn enemies turn out to be phantoms who dissipate in the light of wisdom. The martial mood of the preceding verses, therefore,

⁵⁴ na kleśā viṣayeṣu nendriyagaṇe nāpy antarāle sthitā nāto ’nyatra kuha sthitāḥ punar amī mathnanti kṛtsnaṃ jagat | māyaiveyam ato vimuñca hṛdayatrāsaṃ bhajasvodyamaṃ prajñārthaṃ kim akāṇḍa eva narakeṣv ātmānam ābādhase ||4.47||. Liland has *ime* rather than *amī* here, but I see no reason to depart from La Vallée Poussin; however, Poussin has “*hṛdayaṃ trāsaṃ*,” whereas Minayeff’s “*hṛdayatrāsaṃ*” accords with the Tibetan, where heart is a locative (*snying la*), implying that the Tibetan translators were looking at a compound.

serves its purpose and is then dissolved. Although Śāntideva makes use of anger when no other responses are accessible, the final effect is a cancelling out. Having attacked at his own cherishing of the *kleśas* to inspire fury, both extremes are wiped away by the confrontation. The shift from being under the power of poisonous emotions to declaring them his eternal enemy creates an opening to question the very solidity of the emotions in question. The poisons, after all, rely for their persuasive power on the conviction that they are reasonable, justified responses to external objects (as Śāntideva argues explicitly in relation to anger in chapter six; see Bommarito 2011). When the only reasonable target for anger becomes anger itself, the apparent reality of the situation is intrinsically shaken. Thus we return, again, to a taste of fearlessness.

The chapter concludes with Śāntideva's assurance that he has recovered from *vaidyopadeśāc calataḥ*, shying away or deviating from the doctor's prescription, the Buddha's teaching (4.48). This chapter thus restores the reader's adherence to the prescription of the path, and lays the groundwork for a sober stabilization of *bodhicitta* in all kinds of internal and external conditions. By bringing the doubt and panic with which the chapter began into the text and performing an escalating series of attacks on it from within the framework of *saṃsāra*, Śāntideva makes certain forms of failure to live up to the bodhisattva ideal an anticipated pitfall on the path. In presuming that his audience will turn away from the path in certain ways, or have certain doubts, and performing the antidotes for paralyzing fear, self-interest, and despair, Śāntideva inspires the sober confidence of *bodhicittāpramāda*.

Conclusion: Buddhist Emotion and *Bodhicitta*

What, then, is *bodhicitta* in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*? I have endeavored to demonstrate that, while it relies on many conceptual and ritual processes, Śāntideva's primary concern is with producing the affective transformations required to produce *bodhicitta* and clearing away emotional obstacles to it. This spiral of habituation operates in the fraught domains of experience, ritual, and embodiment. It is transmissible only through a collapse between Śāntideva's voice and that of his audience, a collapse predicated on trust. He then performs, for the model reader to follow, urgency, fear of things as they are now continuing, and a need for things to be different. With *bodhicitta* as a longed for alternative, devotion, reverence, and a recognition of dependence and commitment in the form of refuge follow.

In giving away what is habitually grasped at, and seized with that abandonment, Śāntideva deepens his devotion and refuge, and forswears his former identity. The weight of so much deluded harm crashes down in the terror, sorrow, and urgent renunciation of the confession. Only because Śāntideva has already gone for refuge twice is refuge available in the midst of fearfully imagining death. Out of this parting from one's identity in *saṃsāra*, a flood of emotion is suddenly made possible: unobstructed joy at virtue, unobstructed longing for the presence of the Buddhas, and a wild unwillingness to indulge in self-concept or self-protection. In equal regard for all beings who share his plight, therefore, in joy at what benefits them, love that wishes them well and compassion that drives him to the destruction of their suffering, Śāntideva takes the bodhisattva vow. Like the affective space in which he operates, the vow is limitless: until all beings are

free from all suffering for all time. The first enactment of this sequence relies on ritual containers, on taking Śāntideva temporarily out of his usual self. But the sobriety following this intoxication is different. The usual emotional resources of self-concern, anger, defiance, and fear can now be marshalled towards the causes of suffering, and in support of continuous vigilance of the affects comprising *bodhicitta*. Their basis is destabilized, and it is possible, upon searching for them, to experience their dissolution. The emptiness of the poisonous emotions is freedom for their antidotes, their opposites, to arise, and for the muddier terrains of fear, longing, awe, and determination to appear only in wholesome ways.

The internal logic of this affective framework, the turns and repetitions constituting *bodhicitta*, represent one possible reading of this text. But it is a reading that solves many persistent problems, and reveals coherence and subtlety where they were not visible. When fear and urgency are necessary ingredients to pure compassion – how can we long to alleviate the suffering of beings if we do not recognize it? – their invocation is not contradictory. When praise, reverence, and devotion are how our ideals become visible, it becomes necessary to make offerings to the Buddhas in order to emulate them. The strategic use of poisons, the function of passion and imagination, are made clearer. Reading in this way, internalizing Śāntideva's voice, it becomes possible to feel the difference between being on the path and deviating from it. This text performs a Buddhist orthodoxy of experience, and it has been read, taught, commented upon, memorized, recited, and referenced by Tibetan practitioners on a scale that warrants our attention to that orthodoxy.

If this is *bodhicitta* for Śāntideva, what is emotion? The emotions and affects I have attended to in this thesis, positive and negative, have common qualities as portrayed in the BCA. They are assumed to follow from particular cues: impermanence provokes urgency, fear, and compassion, while offering provokes joy and generosity, and so forth. Each one is incompatible with some emotions, but causes or depends on others. The positive or productive emotions have close failures and distant enemies. Love is not attachment, and cannot coexist with aversion. Compassion is not pity, and is opposed to attachment, but it relies on an accurate recognition of suffering, the morally urgent and thus catalyzing form of fear. Equal regard is prevented by partiality, and so forth. All of these experiences are deepened through repetition, can be cultivated by ritual practice and engagement with arguments, and motivate their own forms of physical and mental action. Śāntideva's account of Buddhist ritual practice presupposes a self-aware checking of whether the ritual action is transforming the mind in the ways it should: he assumes and performs a facility with these affects and what inspires them such that they are accessible in any situation. Their moral valence and consequences are significantly determined by their objects: the poisonous emotions are so embedded in a limited concept of subject and object that trying to aim them at limitless suffering destabilizes them. The immeasurables are intrinsically vast, and more variable states like fear and devotion are made productive or obstructive by what they aim at. These are all processes, rather than states. This array of affects, when framed in terms of their function on the path, might meaningfully be called Buddhist emotions. Certainly, they represent a Buddhist account of emotion.

One important implication of this argument for both theories of experience and the larger history of literary and religious emotion in South Asia is Śāntideva's apparent

presumption of sincerity, transparency, and the reliability of audience response. Infused with the long tradition of the Abhidharma even as he applied Mādhyamaka tools to it, Śāntideva lived in a religious and intellectual world that took subjective experience seriously as composed of reliable, causal processes. As Sonam Kachru puts it, Śāntideva’s “lyric persona” is “a person, subject to all the confusions that change and self-reflection can involve,” and the resulting text “is a literary context whose distinctive texture is in part characterized by nothing in it being long hidden or beyond the reach of articulation” (Kachru 2019, 11–12). Audiences have read, heard, and practiced with this text in order to become like Śāntideva as he is visible through his work.

This makes sense if we see the BCA, not only as a description of the bodhisattva path, but as a mechanism for propelling its author and readers along it. The BCA is filled with cues for its intended effects – including anticipated deviation from the path. These cues are what makes the BCA exceptional: Śāntideva’s first person voice and “self-overhearing” internal dialogue provide a fairly unique literary representation of South Asian Buddhist identity formation and transformation. But the BCA is also an impassioned arrangement of traditional arguments, images, and rituals – based on the canonical citations of the SKS and their correspondence to the key points of the BCA, Śāntideva clearly saw himself as representing what the Buddha had said. Paul Harrison has argued that the difficulty of reading Mahāyāna sūtras lies in their resemblance to scripts for plays or musical notation, fully intelligible only to someone who acts them out or plays their instrument, who knows how to do the work of the text (Harrison 2003, 122). From this perspective, the BCA is like a video of a play being performed: Śāntideva gives us cues and also shows us what he expects us to do with them. The BCA’s picture

of the affective framework of *bodhicitta* and its constituent emotions thus has the potential to shed light on other texts whose model readers are less visible.

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