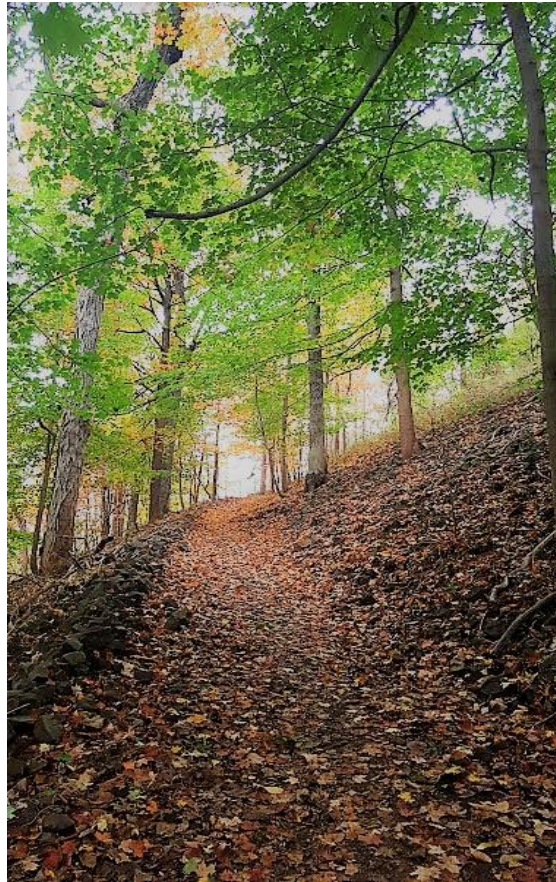


Altruism as Antidote to Demagoguery: Shantideva's Bodhicharyavatara Chapter 3 as Method for  
Countering Identity Divisions



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## Abstract

What is altruism and how may shifting individuals' attentions from self to other diffuse the self-centered power of sustained victimology, identity divisions, and demagoguery? My paper examines altruism, demagoguery, excerpts from Chapter 3 of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, and the fostering of altruism through the practice of bodhichitta. Particularly as it pertains to the commitment a bodhisattva makes in acting for the wellbeing of all sentient life in the development of aspirational and action bodhichitta through spiritual activism. Individuals need not be Buddhist to foster, express, or practice the bodhisattva commitment.

*Keywords:* altruism, demagoguery, demagogue, bodhisattva, bodhichitta, identity divisions, spiritual activism

Dedication of Merit

May this work be for the benefit of all beings and  
the alleviation of suffering, violence, and hatred.

I dedicate this merit to our ancestors gone before us,  
to all our relations amongst the cosmos now,  
and to future generations.

I dedicate this merit with compassion, kindness, and humor  
so that all may live in harmony  
with the bright shine of sun and deep reflection of moon.

## Contents

Abstract .....	2
Dedication of Merit.....	3
List of Tables.....	5
Altruism as Antidote to Demagoguery: Shantideva’s Bodhicharyavatara Chapter 3 as Method for Countering Identity Divisions.....	6
Altruism and Demagoguery .....	7
Bodhicharyavatara, Bodhisattva and Aspirational Bodhichitta .....	19
Altruism, Action Bodhichitta, and the Welfare of All Beings in Practice.....	29
Identity Divisions, Demagogues, and Transformative Nature of Bodhichitta.....	36
Bodhisattvas and Spiritual Activism.....	43
Conclusion .....	49
References.....	53
Appendix A .....	59
Appendix B.....	64

List of Tables

1. Table 1: The Four Immeasurables.....	24
2. Table 2: The Seven Points for Training the Mind.....	30
3. Table 3: The Six Paramitas or Far-Reaching Attitudes.....	32
4. Table 4: Principles of Spiritual Activism.....	46

Altruism as Antidote to Demagoguery: Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* Chapter 3 as Method for  
Countering Identity Divisions

Individuals and groups are experiencing the rise of demagoguery on a global scale. Demagogues' rhetoric bites with hatred and violence in efforts to feed narcissism, self-loathing, and the promotion of suffering. Demagogues seek to foment chaos, confusion, and identity divisions that result in an us-versus-them sentimentality which festers amongst individuals and groups akin to a poison's effects on the body. As the poison moves within, so does the suffering experienced by individuals and groups. Over time a demagogue's toxicity leads individuals and groups to begin a process of expressing anger, blame, and violence towards one another. Personal expression becomes a knee-jerk reaction on the part of individuals and groups to self-experienced pain. The pain is fueled externally by the demagogue and stoked internally by those experiencing a demagogue's abuse of power. The act of demagoguery provides delusions and illusions in the form of numerous scapegoats in response to contrived personal and group suffering.

Is there an antidote to such a poison? A poison that once administered and sustained by a demagogue continues to create identity divisions, violence, self- and other-loathing, hatred, and suffering on personal, local, and global levels? Can altruism and the practice of the bodhisattva commitment outlined in Chapter 3 of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* (Appendix A) serve as a remedy to counterbalance the poisonous barrage of pain, suffering, and violence found within the world? Will fostering altruism through bodhichitta alleviate the creation of suffering by a demagogue while weakening a demagogue's capability to gain power and cause pain?

My paper examines altruism, demagoguery, excerpts from Chapter 3 of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, and the fostering of altruism through the practice of bodhichitta.

Particularly as it pertains to the commitment bodhisattvas make in acting for the wellbeing of all sentient life in the development of bodhichitta through spiritual activism. Individuals need not be Buddhist to foster, express, or practice the bodhisattva commitment.

### **Altruism and Demagoguery**

Poison. A poison is a substance that takes over a system(s) slowly or quickly and creates suffering depending on the poisoner's intentions and the poison's ingredients. Poison in its many forms can be administered to cause physical, mental and emotional suffering. Normally no one wants or likes to experience suffering. As human beings we ironically undertake great pains to avoid suffering. Yet we are quite capable of creating more suffering in the very process of seeking not to suffer!

The Seventh Dalai Lama stated, "If there is a way to free ourselves from suffering we must use every moment to find it. Only a fool wants to go on suffering. Isn't it sad to knowingly imbibe poison?" (Ricard, 2013, p. 37). Suffering happens in the three categories pertaining to the physical, mental, and emotional states of being (Kongrul, 2016). Once the experience of suffering ensues individuals tend to internalize suffering by blaming what is happening outwardly on others, or the system(s), by claiming victimization and wrong-doing (Kongrul, 2016). A demagogue will capitalize on the victim-oriented mentality of their ingroup(s) and use this to their advantage by administering what could qualify as various forms of poison. Namely, a poison which blames the outgroup(s) for the ingroup(s) suffering. The actions of a demagogue then create suffering for everyone by specifically attending to the victimology within and between ingroup(s), outgroup(s), and sustainment of identity divisions. What is altruism and how may shifting individuals' attentions from self to other diffuse the self-centered power of sustained victimology, identity divisions, and demagoguery?

Questions concerning self-interest versus other-interest arise relative to how and why an individual might conduct themselves with selfish or altruistic motivations (Batson, Ahmad, Yin, Bedell, Johnson, Templin, & Whiteside, 1999; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Flynn & Black, 2011; Melvin, 2015; Ricard, 2013). A demagogue seeks to bolster self-interest with the use of ingroup motivations to benefit themselves and individuals found within strategically select ingroups (Goldzwig, 1989; Gustainis, 1990; Johnson, 2017; Roberts-Miller, 2005, 2017). Ultimately, demagogic activity results in selfishly driven motivations as individualism fuels everyone's behavioral drivers (Goldzwig, 1989; Johnson, 2017; Gustainis, 1990; Roberts-Miller, 2005, 2017). Behavioral responses within the ingroup(s) becomes devoid of concern-for-other motivations which might otherwise have nurtured and promoted the motivational factors necessary for fostering altruism (Batson et al., 1999; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Melvin, 2015; Ricard, 2013). Extending beyond selfish and kinship cares towards group selection or super-cooperating motivations shifts individual attentions (Batson et al., 1999; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Melvin, 2015; Ricard, 2013). Individual attentions include the innate and inherent qualities of human concern and are redirected outwardly through actions moving from self, to other, and the world (Batson et al., 1999; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2003; Melvin, 2015; Ricard, 2013). Amidst demagoguery a battle ensues within individuals who now find themselves immersed in a conundrum. The individual is wrought with confusion as biology (intrinsic cognitive information processing); consciousness (intrinsic application of cognitive processing in the form of an intelligent response to action); and spirit (grounding activity in meaning-making); mingle in convoluted efforts concerning the mind's creative capacity to produce even a single activity in the world.



The Oxford-American Dictionary (2010) defines altruism as, “unselfish concern for other people” (p. 24). Comte described altruism as, “the elimination of selfish desire and of egocentrism, as well as leading a life devoted to the well-being of others” (As cited in Ricard, 2013, p. 15). Post defined altruism as altruistic love meaning, “unselfish delight in the well-being of others, and engagement in acts of care and service on their behalf. Unlimited love extends this love to all others without exception, in an enduring and constant way” (As cited in Ricard, 2013, pp. 15-16). Batson maintained, “altruism is a motivational state with the ultimate goal of increasing another’s welfare” (As cited in Ricard, 2013, p. 16). Ricard (2013) stated that Batson’s approach to altruism requires, “a motivation to be altruistic, the well-being of others must constitute a *goal in itself*” (p.16). In the context of Batson, altruism exists as a distinct motivation that finds invocation based on situational needs and dynamics when engaging with others (Ricard, 2013). An individual is not an altruist per se, but harbor the capacity to invoke altruism as a response to given circumstances and environmental factors (Ricard, 2013). Monroe argued that the word altruism must also include, “*actions* carried out for the well-being of others at the price of some risk for ourselves, without expecting anything in return” (As cited in Ricard, 2013, p. 17). Monroe furthered, “good intentions are indispensable for altruism, but they are not enough...one must act, and actions must have a precise goal, that of contributing to the well-being of another” (As cited in Ricard, 2013, p. 17). Turner (2006) maintained altruism involves, “making a bridge to other people; it is a deeply caring attitude of fellow-feeling and giving without thought of self and is therefore close to the sense of empathy” (p.1). Altruism consists of individual intention, activity, and motivation as central characteristics driving behaviors that shift modal activities from one of personal gain to wellbeing for others.

I define altruism as a modal activity on the part of an individual that requires a certain quality, characteristic, and disposition entrenched in genuine loving kindness and compassion. Wherein behavioral reactions represent an authentic self-less response to motivation and activity so long as others represents the goal. Others is defined as human, nonhuman, and Earth in as much that altruism represents authentic care, concern, and respect for all life.

Altruism as modal activity characterizes individual dispositions invoking authentic care, concern, and respect. Ricard (2013) outlined the following as modes of altruism:

- Goodness
- Benevolence
- Solitude
- Dedication
- Kindness
- Fraternity
- Solidarity (p. 16).

These modes identify characteristics lending to the growth and facilitation of altruism by grounding dispositional attitudes in a sense of interconnectedness and interdependence. Especially as it concerns prompting individuals to shift their desire from gain or get to give for the sake of giving.

Batson (As cited in Ricard, 2013) envisaged the following criteria for identifying motivations concerning authentic altruistic responses to others:

- Altruism requires a motivation (instinctive reflex or automatic behavior cannot be qualified as either altruistic or selfish);

- Difference between altruism and selfishness is qualitative (quality of motivation versus intensity that determines altruistic nature);
- Altruistic and selfish motivations coexist in our minds and create a motivational conflict when simultaneously considering our interests and others;
- Motivation out of a sense of duty or to respect law (reasons that are neither altruistic or selfish);
- Carrying thought into action may depend on various factors that are beyond our control (this cannot fundamentally change the altruistic or selfish nature of our motivations);
- Altruism does not require a personal sacrifice (altruism can have personal benefits so long as the benefits do not constitute the goal of our behavior, but exist as secondary consequences of actions);
- Altruism resides in the motivation that leads to action (altruism is authentic so long as the desire for other's welfare exists as the goal independent of motivations transforming into actions);
- By contrast, a selfish person considers others as instruments in the service of their own interests and does not hesitate to neglect, or sacrifice, the good of the other when that turns out to be useful to reach their ends (pp. 18-19).

These criteria examine and test individual behavioral drivers when considering motivations as being representative of altruistic activity. Ricard (2013) contended altruism cannot exist without valuing others and genuinely being concerned for their situation in life. Such a motivation supports the requisite open-mindedness needed for an individual's willingness to step into altruistic activity (Ricard, 2013). Ricard maintained, "To want to build our happiness on others'

suffering is not only immoral, but unrealistic” (p. 34). A demagogue’s motivations are antithetical to the requisite dispositions that would operationally define fostering a person’s will towards altruism. Altruism is representative of expressing love and compassion versus negatively self-centered narcissism that harbors hatred and a willful desire to cause harm. The antithesis of enacting altruism for the authentic welfare of all beings can be found in demagoguery. A demagogue’s sense of happiness is skewing the definition of happiness by relishing, supporting, and propping up aggrandizement.

Demagoguery creates identity divisions and focuses only on the welfare of the demagogue and their ingroup(s) to the detriment of individuals and outgroup(s). Identity divisions characterize a demagogue’s activity via the use of ingroup(s) versus outgroup(s). A demagogue sow’s chaotic seeds necessary for creating confusion to escalate identity divisions and potentially violent conflict. Once a demagogue has begun to cultivate the seeds of chaos the animosity and division between ingroup(s) and outgroup(s) grows deeper.

Roberts-Miller (2017) defines demagoguery as:

Demagoguery is discourse that promises stability, certainty, and escape from the responsibilities of rhetoric by framing public policy in terms of the degree to which and the means by which (not whether) the out-group should be scape-goated for the current problems of the in-group. Public disagreement largely concerns three stases: group identity (who is in the in-group, what signifies out-group membership, and how loyal rhetors are to the in-group); need (the terrible things the out-group is doing to us, and/or their very presence); and what level of punishment to enact against the out-group (ranging from the restriction of the out-group’s rights to the extermination of the out-group). (p. 33).

Gustainis (1990) described the demagogue-as-person using three characteristics that include being, “motivated by self-interest, evinces little concern for the truth, and is an opportunist.” (p. 156). Gustainis argued demagogues seek to grow their own power, exercise influence, and gain popular acclaim (p. 156). The aggrandizement of self and popularity exists as fuel that propels demagogues towards a leadership that preys on the insecurities and deep-rooted resentments that drive the desires of specific peoples (Gustainis, 1990). Demagogues use oration and rhetoric and will offer a very particular demographic of people what they want through false promises-by-design (Gustainis, 1990). By catering to a specific ingroup(s) the demagogue lays the groundwork for identity divisions by creating hostile environments that force ideological segregation between ingroup(s) and outgroup(s).

At the heart of demagoguery is division. The divide and conquer, us versus them mentality, is part and parcel to the ascent and maintaining of external instability amongst the masses (Dobson, 2002; Drutman, 2017; Goldzwig, 1989; Gustainis, 1990; Hart, 2017; Heer, 2017; Johnson, 2017; Polakow-Suransky, 2017; Roberts-Miller, 2005; 2015a, 2015b, 2017; Robson, 2002). The fomenting of instability allows a demagogue to exercise control while carrying out personal agenda's behind the scenes of chaos and deluge (Goldzwig, 1989, Johnson, 2017; Roberts-Miller, 2005). The skewing of information and lack of critical thinking on the part of individuals supports the us versus them mentality that fosters ingroup/outgroup fights over non-sequitur issues, lies, and vitriol the demagogue fabricates (Blow, 2017; Goldzwig, 1989; Farrington, 2017; Gustainis, 1990; Johnson, 2017; Robson, 2002). Roberts-Miller (2015b) maintained demagogues use, “polarizing propaganda that motivates members of an ingroup to hate and scapegoat some out-group(s), largely by promising certainty, stability, and what Erich Fromm famously called ‘an escape from freedom’” (p. 1). This type of activity creates hostile

environments in which hatred is encouraged (Farrington, 2017; Gustainis, 1990; Johnson, 2017; Roberts-Miller, 2005, 2017). The use of race, religion, and economic class hatred are how demagogues appeal to and gain control of, what is often an ingroup(s) minority viewpoint, sentiment, and resentment (Gustainis, 1990). Any form of discursive activity by the outgroup(s) is then considered to be a veritable act of treason against a manipulated and fabricated status quo that includes a constant state of debunking of fact, media, and opinion found to be contrary to the demagogue's polarizing propaganda (Blow, 2017; Farrington, 2017; Goldzwig, 1989; Gustainis, 1990; Johnson, 2017; Roberts-Miller, 2005, 2015b, 2017; Robson, 2002). The creation of identity division and social distortions result in a fast, rapid, all-out assault on the psyche and senses that is used to galvanize demagogic activity.

Rallies, television, radio, and social media platforms promote and provoke continuous chaos that demeans a person, group of people, or country, and supply further social distortions (Blow, 2017; Farrington, 2017; Gustainis, 1990; Hart, 2017; Johnson, 2017). Gustainis (1990) argued, "The nominal demagogue cannot function in an atmosphere of social harmony and tolerance." (p. 157). Demagogues are opportunists and narcissists that will monopolize on situations that provide the ability to create chaos and instability (Farrington, 2017; Gustainis, 1990, Ricard, 2013). Narcissism is defined as, "a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and a lack of empathy" (Ricard, 2013, p. 287). Demagogues are narcissists in that dictatorial tendencies are ever present and acted upon to reify ego satiation and self-confirmation. Ricard (2013) argued, "Dictators are often both narcissists and psychopaths" (p. 289). Demagogue as dictator will seek to embellish, aggrandize, and inflate themselves in efforts to satiate the hunger for power, prestige, and recognition. Ricard furthered, "They are also megalomaniacs, as demonstrated in the mythical dimension with which they embellish their

biographies, their propensity to have monumental statues of themselves erected, and the spectacular parades organized in their honor in front of immense crowds” (p. 289). Mainly, a demagogue-as-dictator will control, divide, conquer, and subject a person(s), place, or thing to the scrutiny of the in-group's oft unfounded prejudices based on media manipulation, spin, flip-flop, and truth-debunking.

Roberts-Miller (2015b) outlined several important points involving the actions and activities conducted on the part of a demagogue:

- Polarization;
- Oversimplification/reduction and simple solutions;
- Ingroup/outgroup thinking, a rhetoric of hate;
- Slipperiness on crucial terms; god and devil terms;
- Demonizing, dehumanizing, and/or scapegoating the out-group;
- Victimization;
- Motivism;
- Entitlement, double-standard, rejection of the notion of reciprocally binding rules or principles;
- Apocalyptic, eschatological metanarrative (Holy War, jihad);
- Denial of responsibility for situation (except lack of vigilance);
- Heavy reliance on fallacious arguments;
- Pandering to popular prejudice and stereotype, often racist;
- Anti-intellectualism and;
- Nationalism (Roberts-Miller, 2015b).

I would add messianic to Roberts-Miller's (2015b) bullet point concerning apocalyptic and eschatological metanarrative as an additional example alongside Holy War and jihad. The demagogue's use of religious fervor propagates an agenda and popularity at the expense of others. Others includes and is not limited to the lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, and queer (LBGTQ) community, Muslims, immigrants, women, race, science, environment, and education (Gafey, 2017; Goldberg, 2017; Weaver, 2017). For example, Evangelical Christian groups that support the current administration of the United States view the leader in a messianic context in which the election constituted an act of Divine Intervention on the part of a God (Gafey, 2017; Goldberg, 2017). This does not include all Christians but a very particular group within the United States citizenry (White Christian America) that are becoming a minority in a constantly changing world (Jones, 2017). A demagogue will capitalize on a belief like messianism and recruit a fast-forming minority group like those found in White Christian America towards furthering their goals. The demagogue then uses an outgroup like the LBGTQ, abortion rights, women's movements, environmentalists, and non-Christian communities as a scapegoat to appeal to and garner the continued support of the White Christian America ingroup. It is the fears, and in this case religious sensibilities of an ingroup, that will ultimately be capitalized on to satiate narcissism and achieve desired demagogic ends. Whether the demagogue believes in said religion or cause holds no bearing on the very act of division being the demagogue's central aim.

A demagogue seeks to bolster their credibility and present themselves as saviors by appearing to align themselves with the ethics, morals, and virtues of targeted classes of citizens (Gustainis, 1990). Gustainis (1990) maintained, "He will espouse conventional religious beliefs;



he will proclaim his patriotism; and he will employ whatever “god terms” he thinks will appeal.” (p. 158). Gustainis provided rhetorical techniques of demagoguery that include:

- Personalized appeal (the demagogue is the movement);
- Oversimplification (the demagogue oversimplifies solutions to complex problems);
- Emotional appeals (emotional appeal to the exclusion of rational thought);
- Specious argumentation (argument is deliberately distorted and citing proof which is proof of nothing at all);
- Ad hominem attacks (use of logical fallacy by ignoring an opponent's arguments by attacking opponents character);
- Anti-intellectualism (intellectuals are the demagogue's foremost enemy since they identify fallacious logic) and;
- Political pageantry (offer personal appeal and emotion versus serious discussion of issues using grand-standing, rallies, marches, repetitive slogans, etc.) (pp.158-160).

A demagogue assails citizens concerning their health and wellbeing, race, gender, economic class, sexual preferences, inalienable human rights, and authentic expressions of religious freedom. The perpetual rhetorical onslaughts of mental debasement seek to generate a psychic fatigue that leads to deeper and deeper divisions between politics, religion, race, gender, and ingroup(s), and outgroup(s) environments.

To find one's self or outgroup reacting viscerally to such an onslaught, and in such a compromising position of principle, truth, and thought, exposes the essence of demagogic rhetoric and activity. Ricard (2013) argued altruism manifests when, “we become fully aware of

the fact that beings behave in a harmful way because they are under the sway of ignorance and the mental poison that ignorance engenders" (p. 34). Altruism consists of generating a mental and modal disposition that attends to fostering care, love, and compassion for those who do the world harm. This does not mean that individuals roll over and let a demagogue's activity run its course (Ricard, 2013). Ricard maintained, "altruism does not consist in minimizing or tolerating the misdeeds of others, but in alleviating suffering in all its forms" (2013, p. 35). This does not disqualify the use of force to stop a demagogue's activity in causing harm (Ricard, 2013). So long as the intentions on the part of a countering force are not another manifestation of hatred and revenge but is deemed necessary to stave off more suffering (Ricard, 2013). Altruism involves actively engaging in the environment where demagogic activity is taking place and doing what one can to actively "break the cycle of hatred" (Ricard, 2013, p. 35). Stepping into the activity of altruism can be challenging, difficult, and hard for individuals or groups that find themselves under the attacks of a demagogue's daily retinue.

What can be done to counter a demagogue's onslaught towards benefiting the welfare of everyone involved without causing more harm and suffering? Without sacrificing the self or the wellbeing of the whole? How does an individual or group maintain a necessary modicum of sanity, compassion, and love in support of the fruition of authentic altruism? If individuals have the inherent capacity to selfishly harbor hatred and cause harm it could be argued that individuals also contain the capacity to act altruistically from a place of love and compassion (Ricard, 2013). Ricard (2013) maintained true altruism exists when individuals generate a sense of wishing that someone, like a demagogue, may become aware of the suffering they are causing themselves and others. Ricard implicitly stated wishing a harm-doer awareness is, "the opposite of the wish to avenge and punish by inflicting more suffering" (p. 35). Most importantly the genuine

expression of altruism in wishing others well, especially those that are causing harm in the world, “is not a sign of weakness, but of wisdom” (Ricard, p. 35). The next sections examine the Bodhisattvas aspiration, action, and development of bodhichitta as it is found in Chapter 3 of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* as method to begin addressing the fostering of altruism.

### **Bodhicharyavatara, Bodhisattva and Aspirational Bodhichitta**

Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* is a guide to the bodhisattva's way of life and serves as a medium to practice and realization in the Buddhist tradition. *Bodhicharyavatara* has been translated as *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds, or How to Lead an Awakened Life*, from the Tibetan and Sanskrit respectively (Garfield, 2010). The translation and verses I used are taken from Geshe Yeshe Tobden's interpretation of the *Bodhicharyavatara* and commentary as found in *Shantideva's Guide to Awakening: A Commentary on the Bodhicharyavatara* (Appendix A) (Tobden, 2017). I particularly focus on Chapter three of the *Bodhicharyavatara*.

Bodhisattvas strive to foster self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism. Self-perfection does not mean selfishness. Self-perfection requires understanding that self-benefiting altruism operates with a dual purpose wherein altruism benefits self and others interdependently (Cheng, 2015). “Depending on yourself doesn't mean you reject other people and do things your own way. It means you touch the core of your life and discover a life worth living” (Katagiri, 2017, p. 6). Self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism means learning how to foster compassion with the inner and outer conditions of existence that affect who we are as individuals (Dorje, 2017). Dorje (2017) maintained, “We need to cherish ourselves and care for ourselves wisely” (p. 67). Self-perfection is self-reliance and cultivation versus selfishness or self-absorption (Dorje, 2017). “In Buddhism we say that each person must become his or her own protector. Learning to do

this is extremely important. It is the basis for us to be able to extend care and protection for others” (Dorje, 2017, p. 67). The self-protection fosters self-benefiting altruism by providing the space to be authentically present in helping others. Humans are individuals involved in a multifaceted cosmos collectively experiencing interdependent relationships on a constant basis. The interdependent relationships consist of an inner and outer sense of self, others, and the world. The heart-work of bodhisattvas means becoming mindful of the mutually caused, multifaceted physical, and emotional activities present within ourselves and the world. All of which are personified within the cosmos's interdependent relationships.

Caring for ourselves with self-reliance including the cultivation of compassion and wisdom establishes the ground for self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism to work inwardly and outwardly in the life of aspiring bodhisattvas. A bodhisattva, “follows the Buddha's aspiration to unconditionally serve living beings” (Fung-kei, 2014, p. 95). Bodhisattvas proclaim, “As I myself want to be quite free from all sufferings, just so all beings want to be quite free from all sufferings” (Sparham, 1992, pp. 225-226). Thus, bodhisattvas engage in the aspiration to emulate compassion, empathy, generosity, love, and kindness solely for the sake of benefiting all sentient life (Cheng, 2015; Fischer, 2012; Funk-Kei, 2014; Garfield, 2010; Rinpoche, 1999; Sparham, 1992). The actions of bodhisattvas strive towards the alleviation of suffering for self and other (Cheng, 2015; Fischer, 2012; Fung-kei, 2014; Garfield, 2010; Rinpoche, 1999; Sparham, 1992; Tobden, 2017). Self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism is considered in Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

- May I become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor,  
And may those who are destitute find from me everything they need.  
May I be beside them, so that they will not find it hard to acquire necessities. (10)  
(Tobden, 2017).
- Without any sense of loss,  
We then dedicate our bodies and enjoyments,  
As well as our past, present, and future merit,  
For the sake of benefiting all beings. (11) (Tobden, 2017).
- May others use my body any way they wish,  
As long as this does not cause any ultimate harm to myself or to them.  
Since I have completely offered myself to others,  
May they find in me all they need,  
And may I never be useless to them. (15) (Tobden, 2017).

Bodhisattvas practice kindness for kindness's sake. Kindness is indicative of intention, action, and manifestation in the world. Bodhisattvas are devoid of seeking any recompense or reward. Fischer (2012) sustained, "To embrace the suffering of others is to be liberated and opened by that suffering, to the point of finding love" (p. xix). Cheng (2015) maintained the aspiration of practicing bodhisattvas includes, "sustainability of the individual, society, and environment" (p. 206). Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara* reads:

- Just like space and the great elements-earth, water, fire, and air-  
May I become the same precious support for  
the lives of all the countless creatures. (21) (Tobden, 2017).

Respecting and realizing the interconnections between the individual, society, and the environment is what sustains the bodhisattvas wish to alleviate suffering (Dorje, 2017). Cheng showed individuals who engaged in the practice of bodhisattvas reported learning more about self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism as a byproduct of aspiration and action. Cheng reported individuals experienced, “personal growth, such as problem-solving techniques, interpersonal skills, and a better self-image” relative to their working environments (2015, p. 207). Cheng’s research supports Fischer’s assertion that, “...compassion is impossible if we can’t learn to bear our own sufferings and difficulties, if our old habit of denying and running away continues to have its way with us” towards the establishment of self-benefiting altruism (p. xix). The intentions of bodhisattvas are grounded in a willingness to deliberately engage in activity that promotes mutual beneficence and holistic well-being for self, other, and world.

The bodhisattvas’ aspiration, path, and practice include contemplating the Four Immeasurables (Table 1). The Four Immeasurables consist of loving kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity (Cheng, 2015; Kraus & Sears, 2008). The Four Immeasurables are an intentional mindfulness practice for bodhisattvas designed to counter hatred, cruelty, jealousy, and anxiety (Kraus, & Sears, 2008). The aspiration to counter hatred, cruelty, jealousy, and anxiety is found in Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

- May I always relate with every being who encounters me in such a way that,  
Whether faith or anger arise in him,  
It becomes the source for fulfilling all his wishes. (16) (Tobden, 2017).

- May all those who mock and insult me,  
Or cause me any other harm,  
Have the fortune to fully awaken,  
And may I be the cause of their awakening. (17) (Tobden, 2017).

Thera (2008) maintained the Four Immeasurables, or sublime states, provide a beneficial remedy for engaging in contact with the world:

They are the great removers of tension, the great peace-makers in social conflict, and the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence. They level social barriers build harmonious communities, awaken slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revive joy and hope long abandoned, and promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism (2008, p. 4).

In practice, the Four Immeasurables become the Four Abodes (Thera, 2008). The Four Immeasurables begin to find place and space in the mind where loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity resides. The Four Immeasurables are boundless and know no partiality, preference, exclusivity, selfishness, or limitations concerning whom the practitioner will enact them towards (Thera, 2008). By allowing the mind to rest in the Four Immeasurables contact with the world and others in everyday experience leads to a mindset that, “will harbour less resentment, tension, and irritability” (Thera, 2008, p. 6). Assuaging restless and irritable mindsets provides the capacity to directly engage the world with an open mind and heart.

*Table 1: The Four Immeasurables*

The Four Immeasurables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Loving Kindness</u> – (<i>metta</i> in Buddhism) – Seeking to alleviate the suffering of self and others by bringing joy and happiness to all situations. To treat all others with unconditional love. The opposite of loving kindness is hatred.</li> <li>• <u>Compassion</u> – (<i>karuna</i> in Buddhism) - Helping others alleviate suffering through experiencing a deep empathy for others pain, sorrow, happiness, joy, etc. The opposite of compassion is cruelty.</li> <li>• <u>Empathetic Joy</u> – (<i>mudita</i> in Buddhism) – Being genuinely happy for the joy, happiness, successes, and well-being others may experience relative to one’s own. The opposite of empathetic joy is jealousy.</li> <li>• <u>Equanimity</u> – (<i>upekkha</i> in Buddhism) – Consists of generosity (minimizing greed and desire), impartiality (fostering egalitarianism), and indiscrimination (dissolving dualistic thinking and actions). The opposite of equanimity is anxiety.</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from “A Qualitative Study of Buddhist Altruistic Behavior,” by F. K. Cheng, 2015, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 25, (pp. 204-213). “Measuring the Immeasurables: Development and Initial Validation of the Self-Other Four Immeasurables (SOFI) Scale Based on Buddhist Teachings on Loving kindness, Compassion, Joy, and Equanimity,” S. Kraus & S. Sears, 2009, *Springer Science+Business Media B. V.*, (pp. 169-181).

To sustain this mindset, the bodhisattvas’ path involves continuous process-learning wherein trial, success, and failure will challenge and teach the aspirant to mindfully develop their actions for self and others unconditionally. The bodhisattva’s goal is to relieve the suffering of sentient beings within the self-benefiting context of altruism’s dual purpose. Namely, realizing the interdependent nature of reality. This means recognizing that reality operates as a multitude



of interdependent variables. The multitude of interdependent variables include all sentient and non-sentient life. These variables are active in an organic universe by means of the arising and dissolution of life's temporary and impermanent manifestations. Material forms and the consequent manifestations of an organic universe are reliant upon interdependent mutual causality. How humans interact with the interdependent arising and dissolution of all material forms, by contemplating the Four Immeasurables, is an essential element of the bodhisattvas practice in developing bodhichitta.

Bodhisattvas foster self-perfection and self-benefiting altruism through mindful awareness concerning life's interdependent activity by means of generating bodhichitta. Practice that generates bodhichitta grounds the aspirant in applicable, practical, and pragmatic wisdom. Bodhi means knowledge, understanding, and realization regarding the causes of suffering, unsettled mind, and imbalanced emotional responses to others and environments (Rinpoche, 1999). Chitta is the mind and heart (Rinpoche, 1999). Rinpoche described chitta as the "awakened heart" (1999, p. 174). Rinpoche (2011) included courage as another characteristic of bodhichitta. Rinpoche stated, "By cultivating a basis of courage in your own state of mind, you are able to diminish and possibly abandon the stronghold of all those circumstances that obstruct your inner potential to be helpful, loving, and kind to others" (2011, p. 2). The cultivation of bodhichitta provides the energy to sustain positivity by feeding on loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity abiding in the mind (Rinpoche, 2011). The motivations of bodhisattvas are driven by bodhichitta through virtuous conduct (Rinpoche, 2011). Rinpoche sustained, "Virtue is about using your senses in a way that is responsive to the needs of others" (2011, p. 2). A verse in the first part of Chapter 3 of *Bodhicharyavatara* address the generation of bodhichitta (Garfield, 2010; Rinpoche, 1997-2001):

- May I be a guide for all travelers and a protector for those without one.

May those who need to be led on the journey to enlightenment,

Or even only through the ordinary world,

Find a guide in me.

May I be a bridge, a boat, and a ship

For all who wish to cross the water. (18) (Tobden, 2017).

Thus, bodhichitta is defined as the courageous, awakened, and realized mind that resonates with compassion and wisdom in mind, body, and heart. Bodhisattvas aim to work effortlessly towards the development of bodhichitta in terms of selflessness, love, generosity, and compassion.

Bodhichitta provides the framework for learning about self and other relative to developing an altruistic interdependent disposition that genuinely embodies self and other. Rinpoche (1999) maintained, "A bodhisattva is a person who has bodhicitta; anybody who develops bodhicitta is a bodhisattva" (p. 174). Generating bodhichitta provides bodhisattvas with strength towards countering negativity for self, others, and world (Rinpoche, 1997-2001). Rinpoche (1997-2001) described the generation of bodhichitta as being, "a very strong and a very determined forward-looking goal, from which you have no wavering of the path, because you have the goal very set" (p. 3). Enacting and embodying the generation of bodhichitta as goal characteristically defines bodhisattvas' activities (Rinpoche, 1997-2001). The generation of bodhichitta as goal requires actively taking responsibility for the welfare of self, others, and world by the virtue of love and compassion. From the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

- May I be an island for those who seek rest.

May I be a lamp for those who are in darkness and look for light.

May I be a home or a shelter for those who need one,

And a servant for all who want one. (19) (Tobden, 2017).

Garfield (2010) maintained bodhichitta includes a moral phenomenon as well. Bodhichitta is, “a standing motivational state with conative and affective dimensions” (Garfield, p. 334).

Bodhichitta involves the development of a moral agency to benefit all beings by practicing skillful means in moral perception, responsiveness, traits of character, and insights into the nature of reality (Garfield, 2010). The suffering that is experienced by sentient beings, as a product of the nature of reality, is illuminated and brought to aspiring bodhisattvas' attention by sustained efforts concerning the generation of bodhichitta.

Bodhichitta consists of intentions and aspirations grounded in the wish to see all sentient beings be free from suffering. Rinpoche (1999) emphasized bodhisattvas seek the achievement of limitless compassion to offer individuals release from suffering in the world (Rinpoche, 1999). Rinpoche's (1999) emphasis on limitless compassion for sentient beings is found in Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*:

- Until they pass away from pain,

May I also be the source of all life for all the realms of varied beings that reach

Unto the ends of space. (22) (Tobden, 2017).

The generation of bodhichitta and limitless compassion provides bodhisattvas with the energy and drive to not only be present as nourishment for self, other, and world, but also sustain the level of personal commitment and resiliency necessary to do so.

Bodhichitta consists of two aspects. The two aspects of bodhichitta are established in the relative and ultimate experience of self, self and others, and world. The first aspect is relative bodhichitta. Relative bodhichitta is defined as compassion and the generation of limitless compassion for self and other (Rinpoche, 1999). Relative bodhichitta is fostered through mindfulness. Mindfulness engages the intellect in support of building and testing knowledge. Limitless compassion provides the capacity for testing this knowledge in experience. Testing knowledge through experience establishes the potential for wisdom to emerge. Thus, relative bodhichitta is limitless compassion and ultimate bodhichitta is wisdom (Rinpoche, 1999). Rinpoche (1999) maintained, "In Buddhism, wisdom means seeing things as they really are and being able to be what one actually is" (p. 175). Wisdom then is experiential. Wisdom needs to be understood beyond the intellectual and conceptual function of mind. Wisdom is embodied interdependently and rooted in direct experiential contact with self, others, and the world.

Generating bodhichitta fundamentally exemplifies embodying compassionate responses towards self which then becomes a direct reflection of being there for others. From the

*Bodhicharyavatara:*

- If we are able to generate bodhichitta, or even just appreciate this precious mind, we will naturally feel happy and joyful. To have come across the teachings of bodhichitta is a fortuitous occurrence that arose due to particular circumstances, like a blind man discovering a lost jewel in a heap of rubbish. (28) (Tobden, 2017).
- Bodhichitta is like ambrosia,  
The supreme nectar that overcomes the tyranny of death. (29) (Tobden, 2017).

Herein the path is laid for bodhisattvas' actions, trials, successes, and failures to be enacted upon with knowledge, experience, and wisdom. Wisdom manifests as the essential goal towards the betterment of self, others, and the world.

The second half of Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, addresses bodhichitta in terms of actions that a bodhisattva takes when engaging aspirational bodhichitta (Rinpoche, 1997-2001, 1999). Bodhicharya is bodhichitta put into action (Rinpoche, 1999). Rinpoche stated, "we use bodhichitta in both ASPIRATION and ACTION" (p. 177). The next section examines the second part of Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* Chapter 3 concerning the actions aspiring or realized bodhisattvas employ in fostering altruism and bodhichitta.

### **Altruism, Action Bodhichitta, and the Welfare of All Beings in Practice**

Learning about self and other requires actively embodying practices aimed at fostering relative and ultimate bodhichitta. Mainly, "Do good, avoid evil, appreciate your lunacy, pray for help" (Fischer, 2012, p. 47). Embodying these practices requires drawing attention to mind in relationship to thoughts, thinking, and doing. There are seven points (Table 2) for training the mind in a Buddhist teaching called *The Root Text of the Seven Points for Training the Mind, The Seven Points of Mahayana Mind Training: A Guide to Benefit Those Embarking on the Authentic Path to Enlightenment*, or *Lojong* in Tibetan (Fischer, 2012; Kongtrul, 2016). The seven points are supplemented by fifty-nine slogans designed as a tool for developing, practicing, and acting on aspiration and action bodhichitta (Appendix B) (Fischer, 2012). For further details concerning the seven points and practices concerning the fifty-nine slogans see Fischer's (2012) *Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong*.

*Table 2: The Seven Points for Training the Mind*

The Seven Points for Training the Mind
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resolve to begin;</li> <li>2. Train in empathy and compassion (absolute and relative compassion);</li> <li>3. Transform bad circumstances into the path;</li> <li>4. Make practice your whole life;</li> <li>5. Assess and extend;</li> <li>6. The discipline of relationship;</li> <li>7. Living with ease in a crazy world (Fischer, 2012, p. xx).</li> </ol>

*Note:* Adapted from “Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong,” by N. Fischer, 2012, *Boston, MA: Shambhala* (p. xx).

Bringing mindful awareness to the seven points provides a simple and applicable practice for reflection (taking the time to meditate) and actions (from meditation to action within the world). The bodhisattvas’ aspiration means starting somewhere as the desire for action arises within you to do something about self- and other-suffering. Altruism manifests most often in reaction to specific events relative to upheaval in personal (self), local (family, friends, and community), and global (political and environmental) activity. Engaging the practice of the seven points provides the ability for altruistic action to arise in any given events whether said events are positive or negative experientially.

A basic commitment to want to do something for the benefit of all beings and the world is the ground for bodhisattva activity. Literally, begin. Start right at the beginning by looking at the basic preliminaries found in life. Basic life preliminaries include:

- The rarity and preciousness of human life.
- The inevitability of death.
- The awesome and indelible power of our actions.
- The inescapability of suffering (Fischer, 2012).

Realization begins with recognizing where suffering starts and exists as the base causes for actions that inflict self or other harm in life. Active mindfulness and awareness of the preliminaries support developing a new view on the nature of suffering as it concerns who, what, when, where, and why suffering occurs. Rinpoche (1997-2001) stated, “With great compassion [those with bodhicitta] want to completely eradicate all the sufferings and all the problems, and with great wisdom they know how to do that” (p. 14). Practicing the preliminaries means becoming mindful that difficulties, concerns, and aspirations exist in an individual’s life and are essentially the same in experience for others. The only place where differences occur in human suffering lies in appearances. Heretofore the experiential aspect of suffering for sentient beings, in all of suffering’s myriad forms, is one and the same. Suffering is universal. Fostering awareness for the universal nature of suffering provides bodhisattvas the ability to extend beyond selfishness and into the disposition that generates self-, other-, and world-benefiting altruism.

The extension beyond selfish motivations, as practice, are found in the six paramitas or six far-reaching attitudes (Table 3) (Chodron, 1993). Attention to the six far-reaching attitudes in contemplation and action supports the generation of aspirational bodhicitta and the doing aspect of action bodhicitta. The engagement and practice of aspirational bodhicitta leads to action bodhicitta. Namely, second nature compassionate responses for self and other within life circumstances.

*Table 3: The Six Paramitas or Six Far-Reaching Attitudes*

The Six Paramitas or Six Far-Reaching Attitudes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generosity that extends beyond the motivation to not just want to give but developing actions and words based on the wish to give;</li> <li>2. Ethics consists of the wish to do no harm in body and speech to self, other, and world;</li> <li>3. Patience means being able to maintain a state of equanimity and calm in any given circumstances especially circumstances that are the most difficult and quick to anger;</li> <li>4. Enthusiastic perseverance or joyous effort involves the wish to do good for the sake of doing good and celebrating in the joy such activity brings, especially when efforts are devoid of acting out of guilt or obligation;</li> <li>5. Concentration means keeping the mind centered in activity that includes calm, chaos, and tiredness while maintaining flexibility;</li> <li>6. Wisdom encapsulates the ability to discern between relative and ultimate truths by seeing into the authentic and true nature of existence i.e. what is beneficial and what is destructive on the path (Chodron, 1993, pp. 2-4).</li> </ol>

*Note:* Adapted from “Overview of the six far-reaching attitudes,” by B.T. Chodron, 1993, Retrieved from <https://thubtenchodron.org/> (pp.2-4).

Action bodhichitta provides individual activity with the requisite energy and mindset to engage difficulty without experiencing self-harm, depression, fatigue, and burnout. From Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*:



- Bodhichitta is the inexhaustible treasure that eliminates all poverty in the world. It is the supreme medicine that cures the world's diseases. It is a refuge in which all beings can find solace and restore their strength in this very life. (30) (Tobden, 2017).
- Like wanderers traveling through a wild, arid, and dangerous area who find a leafy tree that give them shelter, Bodhichitta is the shelter for those of us who are wandering on the path of conditioned existence. (30) (Tobden, 2017).
- It is the support and the bridge for all beings who seek a solution to the problems of cyclic existence; It alleviates suffering like the radiance of the moon dispels the fever of certain illnesses. (31) (Tobden, 2017).

Rinpoche (1997-2001) emphasized, "A bodhisattva wants to help by his or her own will" (p. 15). Rinpoche explicitly included friends, not friends, and enemies within a bodhisattva's explicit will to want to extend help and alleviate suffering. It is in wanting to extend help towards the alleviation of suffering that action bodhichitta requires attention to virtue.

Virtue represents bodhisattvas' conduct and activity within the daily routine of living selflessly. Virtue is contingent upon benevolent actions that require diligence, activity, and a commitment to pushing through failure and accepting successes with humility. Action bodhichitta means cultivating mindfulness relative to virtuous conduct and action. Rinpoche (2014) recommended attention to five principles in practice that aid in aligning mindfulness with activity:

- Unconditional love towards the development of loving kindness, as loving kindness and bodhichitta depend on a love that knows no conditions, no agendas, and no ambitions;
- Strong awareness that puts loving kindness first and foremost in activity, commitments, and the desire to see all beings be happy;
- The aspiration to see that all sentient beings do not meet with, or encounter the causes of suffering, as well as learning what suffering teaches when suffering occurs;
- The wish for enlightenment that, “allows you to overcome absolutely all traces of self-cherishing” and, “by cultivating diligence in building mindfulness, mindfulness will free you from becoming a cause of suffering to others” (p. 5);
- The fostering of diligence and exertion to be able to work with all circumstances and obstacles that are encountered in life circumstances (Rinpoche, 2014, pp. 3-5).

Rinpoche (2014) maintained these five principles of aspirational bodhichitta are synonymous with action bodhichitta. Being virtuous is relative to not only thinking about what is the right act for a particular moment but doing what is the right act for all circumstances. Rinpoche stated, “In the end, virtue is nothing other than good actions of body, good actions of speech, and good actions of mind in the form of positive thoughts” (2014, p. 9). Mindfulness builds the bridge that connects thoughts with feelings (generation of bodhichitta) and actions (action bodhichitta).

A study conducted by O'Connor, Rangan, Berry, Stiver, Hanson, Ark, and Li (2015) supports the five principles as addressed by Rinpoche (2014). O'Connor et al. compared a group of ( $N = 2409$ ) contemplative practitioners that included Tibetan Buddhists, Theravada Buddhists,

Centering Prayer, Yoga, and Mindfulness to a group ( $N = 450$ ) of non-contemplative practitioners on measures of psychological functioning (pp. 991-992). O'Connor et al. showed contemplative practitioners engaged in contemplative meditation, that emphasized compassion and kindness for others as central to practice, scored significantly higher (38.89% to 14.45%),  $\chi^2(1) = 98.51, p < .001$  (p. 996) than practitioners whom did not. O'Connor et al. argued findings support general findings in contemplative practices wherein practitioners exhibit less vulnerability to depression, anxiety, empathic distress, maladaptive guilt, and higher resiliency on a personal level (pp. 996-997). Importantly, the other-focused aspects of practice showed significantly higher results relative to compassionate altruism towards strangers, empathy-perspective taking (cognitive), extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and the general factor of personality, versus those who did not focus on others central to practice (p. 994). The findings of the O'Connor et al. study support the value of attending to a teaching like Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara* as part of an individual's contemplative generation of compassion and the work of manifesting altruism in action. Especially as it concerns the benefits of generating aspirational and action bodhichitta wherein mindful awareness for others supports the growth of self-benefiting altruism.

The practice of mindfulness in concert with the aspirational and action orientations of bodhisattvas' commitments to wellbeing, as found in Shantideva's Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, provides the ground for the generation of aspirational bodhichitta wherein intentions become synchronous with action bodhichitta. The O'Connor et al. (2015) findings illustrated the importance of attending to others in thought and action as it concerns the aspirational intentions and direct actions of bodhisattvas. Mindfulness directs the responses of individuals in directions that support beneficial aspirations, authentic virtue, and engaged

interactions towards self, other, and the world. The next section examines applying the principles of bodhichitta to transform the experiences of individual, local, and global identity divisions created by a demagogue into beneficial altruistic activities concerning self, others, and the world.

### **Identity Divisions, Demagogues, and Transformative Nature of Bodhichitta**

Enacting bodhichitta requires a compassionately critical examination of one's self, place, and space in the world. Looking within requires individual aspirants to acknowledge suffering exists. It then becomes incumbent upon the individual to realize suffering is compounded when humans do not pay attention to actions that lead to the creation of more suffering. Combining aspirational intentions of bodhisattva activity with direct action provides the opportunity to work with trial, success, and failure (Rinpoche, 2011). Herein, the experience of the transformative nature of bodhichitta is manifesting within the individual. Rinpoche (2011) stated,

In this modern world, we have built up our societies in such a way that we've all become very adept at covering things up. Nothing looks ugly or sad, nothing looks inefficient, nothing looks like it's actually on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Everyone looks very good-but this kind of cover-up doesn't allow us to address the issue of suffering (p. 7).

The biggest step involves acknowledging on individual and societal scales that human created suffering exists in the first place. In terms of direct experience, this presents as the toughest and biggest step of them all!

Societies have been experiencing clashes in positive and negative ways since human beings chose to enact the socially-constructed paradigms we currently experience on such a large scale. The choice to advance societies exponentially has led to the formation of massive groups

of people sharing in the same space and place on personal, local, and global levels. Hall and Du Gay (2006) maintained, “modern societies are therefore by definition societies of constant, rapid, and permanent change” (p. 277). Splintering, fracturing, and violence are the result of not taking the time to understand one another in terms of equality relative to culture, religion, race, gender, choice, ethnicity, resources, the environment, economic standards, and living means (Hall & Du Gay, 2006; Sampson, 1993; Sen, 2008; Spickard, 1999). Sen (2008) warned that not taking the time to go beyond surface-based cultural theories like the clash of culture and civilization, or solitarist approaches, will continue to support “hate at first sight” mentalities in perpetuity (p. 6). Hall and Du Gay argued a modern decentering process is taking place in which individuals are decentralized from their place in the social and cultural world in terms of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and nationality. The effects of contemporary rapid forces of globalization leads to individuals becoming decentered from not only cultural contexts but from themselves as well (Hall & Du Gay, 2006). The decentering of cultural contexts and the self, results in the subsequent creation of cultural and individual identity crises (Clark & Clark, 2009; Hall & Du Gay, 2006). Hall and Du Gay further asserted, “the *pace of change* and the *scope of change* – as different areas of the globe are drawn into interconnection with one another, waves of social transformation crash across virtually the whole of the earth’s surface – and the *nature of modern institutions*” (Authors’ italics, 2006, p. 278). Clark and Clark (2009) argued, “Staying and moving, local and global, place and space are pitted against each other in moral arguments” in considering the precipitous actions of demagogues in forging deliberate populist and divisive activities (p. 313). The manifestation of cultural and individual crises on a global scale has a splintering effect on the human psyche. Leaving individuals to feel isolated and alone if there is

no ground for centering the feelings and experience connected with such changing and sweeping tides.

Individuals feeling splintered, isolated, and alone due to rapid globalization is a negative consequence of not finding the ability to work with such drastic changes. There are positive and negative ways of working with the sweeping changes of globalization towards counterbalancing forced individual or group isolation. Hall and Du Gay (2006) maintained rapid global effects experienced by individuals as adverse will result in negative self-effects and self-decentering. Clark and Clark (2009) stated, "Choosing isolation and imposing it on others are manifestations of inequalities in struggles over what is to take place when and where" (p. 313). The adverse effects of rapid global change force individuals to seek out others and become a member of groups yearning to identify with the individual and cultural identity crises. It is at this critical point that an emergent leader with charismatic demagogic appeal is produced. Individuals will begin to collectively align themselves with a demagogue. A demagogue who is seeking to deliberately create and nurture out-group divisions as scape-goat while simultaneously bolstering the formation of the in-group. Once established, in-group and out-group divisions result in violent reactionary movements as an outlet for the feelings connected to decentered individuals who are experiencing self-aggression, confusion, and pain.

The in-group then acts in ways that support aggression if a counterbalance does not exist to resolve and build bridges between individual, local, and global relationships. In-group and out-group mentalities thrive on divisions created deliberately by way of governance, religion, racism, gender, sexual preference, and manipulated economics. A demagogue will monopolize on each of the divisions between in-group and out-group and use the resultant effects as a form of control that perpetuates disparities by means of direct manipulation. Controlled economic

disparities and the resultant poverty levels, religious manipulations, gender inequalities, racial differences, and sexual preference persecution, within or across civilizations, supports the creation of violence and the dissolution of altruism (Clark & Clark, 2009; Roberts-Miller, 2015a, 2015b, 2017; Ricard, 2013; Sampson, 1993; Sen, 2008, Spickard, 1999). The result of such inclement activity manifests in an every-human-for-themselves mentality that is deliberately nurtured by political leaders, religious leaders, governing bodies, wealthy classes, corporations, or a demagogue (Clark & Clark, 2009; Roberts-Miller, 2015a, 2015b, 2017; Sampson, 1993; Sen, 2008; Spickard, 1999). Individuals or groups may attempt to provide bridge building opportunities, but group mentalities as byproduct of demagogic manipulation concerning religion, culture, ethnicity, or moral convictions will create the space where one individual or group is supported to the detriment of another (Hall & Du Gay, 2006; Roberts-Miller, 2017; Sampson, 1993; Sen, 2008; Spickard, 1999). The byproduct most often experienced because of all this human created activity results in:

- negative contexts (biases, prejudices, bigotry);
- precipitous results (racism, sexism, homophobia, gender-choice bias);
- false pretenses (fake news, pre-emptive strikes, manipulated or suppressed research);
- and ultimately greater suffering (violence, warfare, loss of life, genocide)

(Kyabgon, 2015; Ricard, 2013; Sampson, 1993; Sen, 2008; Spickard, 1999).

Only direct actions by individuals or movements grounded in altruistic motivations that express an authentic loving-kindness, like that of bodhisattvas, can manifest beneficial world responses to such self-perpetuated human suffering.

Constant human experimentation with civilization building, the prevalence of negative contexts, abuses of power, and the resultant greater suffering had originally led to the creation of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UDHR) (Spickard, 1999). The UDHR in theory applied to everyone on a global scale as individuals and collective societies (Spickard, 1999). The UDHR includes moral individualism (individual rights); human equality (self and other on same level); social interconnectedness (taking responsibility for one another in creating a sustainable local-global society); universalism (to counter deep personal, local, and global identity divisions); whilst ensuring these rights extend to all humans on a global level (Spickard, 1999, pp. 5-9). Clark and Clark (2009) argued without a balance being struck between individual autonomy and cooperation identity divisions will continue to create negative isolation. Clark and Clark maintained, "Communities remain strong insofar as they cultivate strong individuals who bear responsibilities, act morally, and see beyond antagonisms to common interests and shared outcomes" (p. 316). Current negative global tensions and the emergence of adverse demagogic leadership on a global scale is causing unhealthy isolation for individuals, communities, and is now literally speaking to the potential for a Third World War (Zurcher, 2017). The need to revisit the UDHR and consider altruistic practices akin to the bodhisattva ideal is arising in 2018. Clark and Clark aptly stated, "Our individual freedoms are protected within communities made stronger by our cooperative sharing. The rights and liberties we cherish depend significantly on the security we ensure by our willingness to share responsibilities with and to each other" (p. 316). It is my assertion that Clark and Clark's sentiment could find applicability on a global scale. Especially if human beings want to establish a space for dialogue, understanding, or altruism between individuals, in-group and out-group identity divisions, and demagogic manipulations.



The absence of the space for authentic altruism to flourish, is deliberately created by a demagogue seeking to satiate demagogic narcissism, and the individual desires of the in-group. Thus, demagogic activity is leaving individual and out-group voices to fend for their own identities. The out-group finds themselves in the presence of critically hostile in-group masses produced by, and ready to satiate, a demagogue's narcissistic desires. Here is where I argue altruism, genuine loving kindness, and the aspirations and actions of bodhisattvas can serve as antidote to the poisons being administered by a demagogue and imbibed by the in-group(s). Buddhist teachings identify such negative activity as consisting of the three poisons. The poisons are greed, hate, and delusion respectively. Embracing the bodhisattva aspiration affords the opportunity to serve as a model for what has been lost in the sweeping tides of demagogues administering the three poisons and the resultant negative effects. Bodhisattvas' activities aim to counter the vitriol of greed, hatred, delusion, and division with love and altruism. As Patrul Rinpoche declared:

[Human beings] aspire to happiness, yet they perpetuate the causes of suffering. Filling your mind with love and compassion, vowing to dispel the suffering of all beings, don the armor of boundless courage! Train in seeing others equal to oneself, train in exchanging oneself for others, then train in holding others dearer than oneself. (Rinpoche, 1808-1887/2017, p. 129).

Patrul Rinpoche called upon individuals to embody, express, and rise to the challenge of establishing the ground for bodhichitta, compassion, and altruism. Individual knowledge of Patrul Rinpoche's and Shantideva's words is one thing. The aspiration of the bodhisattva needs to move beyond mind in meditative state towards practical application and action in experience.

The Tibetan yogi Patrul Rinpoche served as an example of the bodhisattva's commitment to conduct one's self selflessly in the world with a piercing love and compassion. Studying, practicing, and internalizing aspirational and action bodhichitta leads to developing the ability to work with directly transforming and experiencing self- and other-benefiting altruism.

Transformation only occurs with direct experience. Therefore, taking what is learned in contemplation of Shantideva's Chapter 3 (Appendix A) of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, engaging in the practices of the four immeasurables (Table 1), the seven points for training the mind (Table 2), the six paramitas (Table 3), and the 59 slogans (Appendix B), aid in generating the antidotal transformation of negative, harmful, and self-decentering actions. Individuals need to not only contemplate bodhichitta they need to do bodhichitta. Engaging in the practice of developing aspirational and action bodhichitta provides the ability to test knowledge in experience and thus transform what is learned into wisdom.

Transformation plays a role in learning how to work with what is learned personally in fostering the capacity to move individual activities out into the world. Especially in terms of generating altruism. Vieten, Amorok, and Schlitz (2006) argued the need to connect with, feel, and directly experience the bridge between, self, other, place, and space is required for the development of altruistic and compassionate responses to occur from within individuals. Vieten et al. showed individuals who were engaged in practices that provided the opportunity to connect their own relative experiences with the ultimate picture of the world, exhibited compassionate and altruistic dispositions. Vieten et al. described the relative and ultimate connections made by individuals as, "consciousness transformation" (p. 920). Emergent themes of consciousness transformation outlined by Vieten et al. included:

- Experiences of oneness and interconnection;
- Shifts in perspective;
- Changes in sense of self and self in relationship to others;
- Decentralization of the self;
- Increased kinship with others;
- More than just empathy;
- Not selfless but an “authentic self” (like that of self-benefiting altruism);
- Enhancement of a natural capacity for compassionate love;
- Personal distress and empathetic concern in seeing another in distress and wanting to help and;
- Translating momentary experiences into long-term shifts (2006, pp. 922-929).

The aspiration of a bodhisattva requires bodhisattvas engage in altruistic actions if consciousness transformation is going to lead to the eventual manifestation of action bodhichitta as second nature response to self- and other-suffering. The emergent themes of consciousness transformation support the dissolution of the three poisons, individual and social identity divisions, and the demagogue's poisonous administrations, but bodhisattvas' activities need to be grounded in a form of authentic spiritual activism if said transformations are to occur.

### **Bodhisattvas and Spiritual Activism**

Thinking and doing are two different aspects of yoking the activity of mind with the physicality of body via our interdependent relationship found *within* the cosmos. Spiritual activism supports the development of self, other, and world in deepening inherent connections on personal, social, and ecological grounds. Attending to the distillation of aspirational and action bodhichitta provides the tools and energy to promote inner < > outer change. The bodhisattva

disposition described by Shantideva provides the mind, heart, and body the requisite space to enact and embody change with compassionate fearlessness and courage. Coder (2012) asserted, "Marrying the spiritual development and social change efforts is the principle focus of socially-engaged spirituality, which can generally be described as an emerging model that combines the work of social transformation with the work of individual development" (p. 116). Engaging in spiritual activism, like the activities inherent in the aspirations and actions of bodhisattvas, furthers the development of bridges that erode the forces present in the creation of personal, social, and ecological identity divisions. Yasuno (2008) maintained, "Thus, if we are to secure our survival as a species on this planet, there is a need to move from a mentality of competition to one of cooperation based on the interconnectedness of all life" (p. 2). The ability to establish fields of personal, social, and ecological experiences, wherein competition transforms into cooperation, becomes the mind and heart work of bodhisattvas. Individually and cooperatively.

Defining spiritual activism is a work in progress and currently finds definition in several ideological principles that set parameters for the establishment of a grounded approach to action (Table 4). Coder (2012) defined spiritual activism as a positive means towards transformation of self that consists of the capacity to develop a requisite non-dual consciousness. Non-dual consciousness supports open-minded and beneficial changes in relationships between personal, social, and ecological environments (Coder, 2012). Keating (2008) maintained spiritual activism fosters meaning making, personal agency, and relational worldviews via a holistic lens that supports self-change and social transformation. Horowitz and Frey (2006) stated spiritual activism requires a deep commitment to spiritual life and practices within a framework of applied liberation, movement building, and an overarching desire to see change in the world based on equity and justice (p. 1). Horowitz and Frey maintained spiritual activism pushes

individuals to move beyond us versus them and towards interrelationships as a byproduct of committed action. They stated, "When we clearly open to *what is*, we gain the ground to imagine what might be possible" (Horowitz and Frey, 2006, p. 3). Being open to personal, social, and ecological environments is a critical aspect of fostering aspirational bodhichitta. Open-mindedness supports individual aspirational commitments to action bodhichitta in the development of antidote-as-remedy to countering demagoguery and identity divisions as outlined by Shantideva in Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*. The spiritual activity of bodhisattvas does not only involve being open-minded and settling for self-only satiated complacency or inaction. The aspiration and actions of bodhisattvas requires taking open-mindedness a step further by embracing a large degree of risk-taking and a willingness to engage in difficult personal, social, and environmental situations.

Table 4: Principles of Spiritual Activism

Principles of Spiritual Activism		
<p><b>10 Determinants for Mature Spiritual Activism (Coder, 2012)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-idealism</li> <li>• Kindness</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Immediacy</li> <li>• Integrated</li> <li>• Personal Questioning</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Embracing Opposites</li> <li>• Relationship</li> <li>• Ordinarity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Principles of Spiritual Activism (Satyana Institute, 2016)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation of motivation from anger/fear/despair to compassion/love/purpose.</li> <li>• Non-attachment to outcome.</li> <li>• Integrity is your protection.</li> <li>• Integrity in means and ends.</li> <li>• Don't demonize your enemies.</li> <li>• You are unique.</li> <li>• Love thy enemy.</li> <li>• Your work is for the world, not for you.</li> <li>• Selfless service is a myth.</li> <li>• Do not insulate yourself from the pain of the world.</li> <li>• What you attend to, you become.</li> <li>• Rely on faith and let go of having to figure it all out.</li> <li>• Love creates the form. Not the other way around.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Seven Themes for Spiritual Activism (Sheridan, 2012)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritual motivation for justice work.</li> <li>• Recognition of interdependence.</li> <li>• Means Matter.</li> <li>• Acceptance of not knowing.</li> <li>• Openness to suffering.</li> <li>• Outer change requires inner work.</li> <li>• Commitment to spiritual practice.</li> </ul>

*Note:* Adapted from "Shaking the World Awake: A Constructivist Cross-case Analysis of the Phenomenon of Mature Spiritual Activism," by K. E. Coder, 2012, *The Australian Psychological Society Ltd*, 24(2), (pp. 115-134). "Principles of Spiritual Activism," by Satyana Institute, 2016, Retrieved from <http://www.satyana.org/> (pp. 1-2). "Spiritual Activism: Ground Ourselves in the Spirit," by M. J. Sheridan, 2012, *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 31, (pp. 193-208).

Stepping into the activities of bodhisattvas requires individuals to open themselves up to experiences that will be challenging in terms of vulnerability. A healthy approach to spiritual activism provides the space to foster the actions of an aspiring bodhisattva in heart, mind, and body. Keating (2008) identified the importance of understanding that spiritual activism contains a transformative process wherein it becomes important to acknowledge difficulty, complications, uncertainty, and self and other doubt. Acknowledging transformative processes requires individuals to understand that participating in spiritual activism will include directly experiencing pain, violence, and suffering as a product of engaging personal, social, and ecological change (Keating, 2008). It is important to remember sustaining the aspirational bodhichitta while enacting action bodhichitta to avoid overextending individual activities that result in negative effects on personal, social, and ecological levels.

Actively engaging processes of change are inherent to the activities found within the way of bodhisattvas. It becomes incumbent on the part of the individual to sustain not only their own mind, heart, and body in positive ways, but to also become mindful of how individual activities are affecting others and the environment to avoid undue divisive negative outcomes. Sheridan (2012) cautioned against experiencing burnout and the creation of polarization. Burnout includes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual exhaustion when seeking to maintain grit, sustainability, and resiliency (Sheridan, 2012). Polarization risks the creation of situations in which identity divisions are deepened as opposed to bridged if spiritual activism only fosters more of the us versus them mentality (Sheridan, 2012). Burnout and polarization are antithetical to the way of bodhisattvas and their activities in the world (Appendix A). The practices found in fostering aspirational bodhichitta serve as a medium to countering burnout (Appendix B). The commitment found in action bodhichitta calls upon aspiring bodhisattvas to work from a place of

self-benefiting altruism that includes humility, selflessness, and care for others in terms of individuals, society, and environmental spaces. Honoring the bodhisattva commitment does not entail competition, does not support who is better or one-up games, nor does it support dogmatic approaches to how one defines or enacts kindness, generosity, and compassion. Actively supporting a sustained bodhisattva practice, while healthily engaging in forms of spiritual activism, does require a deep level of commitment, dedication, resiliency, perseverance, patience, and grit.

The aspiration of bodhisattvas, as described by Shantideva in Chapter 3 of the *Bodhicharyavatara*, finds bodhisattvas offering themselves as the catalyst for creating beneficial change with the generation of compassion (bodhichitta) as the ground. Fischer (in Sperry, 2016) described the spiritual activism of bodhisattvas as follows:

Bodhisattvas are committed to their practice, which means to sit, to get up, and to sweep the garden—the whole world, close in and far away—every day, no matter what. They have always done this; they always will. Good times, bad times, they keep on going just the same. Bodhisattvas play the long game. They have confidence in the power of goodness over time. And they know that dark times bring out the heroic in us.

Akin to the described intentions of bodhisattvas, spiritual activism requires engaging in activity that promotes healthy changes in self, others, and the environment. Coder (2012) described the catalytic energy of spiritual activism as an intrinsically developmental process that enables individuals to learn and grow cognitively, evolve spiritually, develop resilience, and deepen a sense of common humanity (p. 130). The development of intrinsic responses within self, other, and environment is central to the generation of bodhichitta as well as the aspirations and actions of bodhisattvas. Coder maintained the maturation of intrinsic processes further deepens the



connections between self in relationship to other as a product of engaging in spiritual activism. The actions produced by spiritual activism manifest in individual abilities to provide others with empowerment, making a difference, calls to greater freedom, and enabling philosophical and structural changes (Coder, 2012, pp. 130-131). Providing the ground to contemplate, aspire, act courageously, while safely engaging self, other, and environmental impermanence, is an inherent principle for establishing spiritual activism. Enacted in this way, spiritual activism authentically precipitates beneficial adaptability and change relative to self, others, and environments. Individual and group willingness to work with adaptability and change supports the development of genuine self and other altruism, kindness, love, compassion, and equanimity while encompassing all of life's environmental factors intrinsically, extrinsically, and holistically.

### **Conclusion**

In the contemporary world, though, altruism is more than ever a necessity, even an urgent one. It is also a natural manifestation of human kindness, for which we all have potential, despite multiple, often selfish, motivations that run through and sometimes dominate our minds.

-Matthieu Ricard, 2013, *Altruism: The Power of Compassion to Change Yourself and the World*

I began writing this work in the Fall of 2017. As a United States citizen, I have experienced the rise of Donald Trump as President and the growing development of Trumpism in this country. A giant rift opened in the last two years that has unleashed long unattended to historical levels of suffering, hatred, and bigotry in the United States. Now, in the Spring/Summer of 2018, identity divisions have since deepened and a thick level of polarization between ingroup(s) and outgroup(s) continues to take root and grow. Furthermore, the identity

divisions and polarizations are being nurtured by the activities of demagoguery and self-satiating narcissistic despots not only in the United States, but on a global scale as well. Populism, nationalism, and individualism is growing globally and at a rapid rate. Animosities are at boiling points in which violence has and continues to manifest in physical (injurious and death), emotional, and verbal harm, as a byproduct of people forgetting our common humanity.

Ingroup(s) and outgroup(s) are fast becoming even more violent and hateful versus peaceful and compassionate within the dominant frames of social structures. Humans are collectively working together to challenge demagogic tides but face fierce challenges. The violence and hatred are being propped up by mainstream news media outlets that have acquiesced to the feeding of identity divisions by promoting chaos versus healthy, critical, rational, and direct challenges to the activity of demagogues. In addition, social media has become an extremely toxic environment and weapon where people on individual and collective levels espouse polarizing mistruths, self-affirmations, myths, and vehement violent hatred behind the safeguard of internet anonymity. The ingroup(s) and outgroup(s) are consciously and unconsciously supporting deeper polarization by failing to find a modicum of reasonable and respectful middle-ground to even begin some semblance of rational discourse and conversation.

As I found myself thinking about what I can do, what I can offer to act in a way that supports bridge-building and the fostering of altruism through thought and deed, I remembered a teaching from Pema Chodron. Chodron (2008) stated:

Those who train wholeheartedly in awakening bodhichitta are called bodhisattvas or warriors - not warriors who kill but warriors of nonaggression who hear the cries of the world. Warrior-bodhisattvas enter challenging situations in order to alleviate suffering.

They are willing to cut through personal reactivity and self-deception. They are dedicated to uncovering the basic, undistorted energy of bodhichitta (p.5).

With Pema Chodron's words in mind and practice, it is my intention that this paper, my thoughts and ideas surrounding altruism, aspirational and action bodhichitta, and the way of the bodhisattva may be of benefit to all beings. Any errors in understanding throughout my work are my own. I simply seek to offer compassion, kindness, love, generosity and respect to the alleviation of suffering in the world.

I first encountered Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva* some 30 years ago while working in a bookstore. I can still remember randomly opening the book to the lines in Chapter 3 that read, "May I be a boat, a bridge, and a ship for all who wish to cross the water...May I be an island for those who seek rest...May I be a lamp in the darkness for those who look for light..." (Tobden, 2017, Verses 18 & 19). That moment with Shantideva and the reading of those passages continues to be a silent yet loud reminder in the back of my mind daily as personal practice right now. Although my efforts to practice are far from, and never perfectly enacted, I endeavor as best as I can to live up to Shantideva's wisdom while I am living and doing within this world. The way of the bodhisattva offers a practice for fostering altruism that individuals can enact on their own or together on small- and large-sized scales. People do not need to be a Buddhist to enact compassion, kindness, generosity, respect, humility, gratitude, and love. The way of the bodhisattvas is a method for working towards being the best kind people we all have the potentiality to be in terms of altruism and super-cooperation. Simple acts of daily kindness are the acts of bodhisattvas. Bigger acts of kindness on greater scales are also the acts of bodhisattvas. Simple or big acts of kindness are the same acts when the entire experience of living within the cosmos is connected interdependently.

The importance of taking chances, working with opportunities, and engaging potentiality by embracing trial, error, failure, and success with an open heart and mind are critical to transforming aspiration into action. Chodron (2008) called this, "being comfortable with uncertainty" (p. 5). Chodron (2001) described engaging in the activity of bodhisattvas as being experimental in nature. It is important to try, to live, and to learn what works and does not work when fostering altruism. Chodron (2001) stated:

At the end of the activity, whether we feel we have succeeded or failed in our intention, we seal the act by thinking of others, of those who are succeeding and failing all over the world. We wish that anything we learned in our experiment could also benefit them (p. 1).

The bodhisattva commitment emphasizes the importance of yoking aspirational and action bodhichitta together by bringing what is learned in meditation and contemplation out into the world.

The activity involved in taking self- and other-contemplation to the world is the primary objective of transforming self-benefiting altruism as antidote into all-encompassing actions as method for the alleviation of identity divisions. Altruism as actions now affords individuals the ability to realize the cosmos's dynamic interdependent relationships and ultimately support the cessation of self, other, and world suffering. The aspiration and generation of bodhichitta and acting from bodhichitta, can be extremely challenging in the presence of fierce identity divisions found within individuals, civilizations, cultures, religions, politics, and the activities of demagogues. It is in the middle of these challenges that the world calls for aspiring bodhisattvas to practice harder, step up, and step into, the places that frighten us the most when it comes to breaking down the walls that support division, hate, and the creation of suffering.

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## Appendix A

Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* Chapter 3 – Verses as Given by Geshe Yeshe Tobden\*

*Chapter 3 – Full Acceptance of the Awakening Mind*

We delight in our own karma,  
 In our own happiness and that of others,  
 And in the happiness, that,  
 Like a peaceful interval between long periods of suffering,  
 Can also be experienced in unfortunate samsaric states. (1)

Let us rejoice in this positive karma,  
 In the gathering of virtue,  
 In the causes that allow liberation from samsara,  
 And in the merit accumulated by the shravaka arhats,  
 The prateyabuddha arhats,  
 And the arya-the higher beings-who have gained final freedom from the miseries of cyclic  
 existence. (2)

The desire of the buddhas is that all beings may be free from suffering  
 And attain the final state of complete awakening;  
 Hence their virtue is a boundless ocean.  
 Let us rejoice in it. (3)

Let us gladly rejoice in the bodhisattvas' virtue;  
 In the merit needed for a more favorable rebirth;  
 In positive karma, the cause of nirvana;  
 And in the virtues leading one to enlightenment. (4)

The fifth branch is requesting the buddhas to turn the Dharma wheel. (5)

The sixth branch is pleading the buddhas and bodhisattvas to continue to guide us for as long as possible so that we may find the right path, since at present we are like blind people wandering in the darkness of samsara. (6)

The seventh branch is the dedication of virtue collected through previous practices. We dedicate the virtue accumulated in the past present, and future to the attainment of enlightenment for the sake of all beings. (7)

Thinking of all beings as patients in need of a cure,  
 Let us continue our aspiration,  
 Wishing to be doctors, nurses, and medicine  
 Until all beings are completely cured. (8)

Let us dedicate our positive karma,  
 So that it may become a rain of food and drink descending to clear away the thirst and hunger,  
 And let us pray that we ourselves may during times of famine be changed into food and drink.  
 (9)

We can resolve, "May I become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor,  
 And may those who are destitute find from me everything they need.  
 May I be beside them, so that they will not find it hard to acquire necessities." (10)

Without any sense of loss,  
 We then dedicate our bodies and enjoyments,  
 As well as our past, present, and future merit,  
 For the sake of benefiting all beings. (11)

At the moment of death we will have to leave behind our bodies,  
 Which are so dear to us.  
 Is it not better to offer them now,  
 Achieving such great benefit by doing so,  
 Than to have to abandon them later without purpose? (12)

"Having given this body up for the pleasure of all living beings,  
 It is no longer my concern if they insult me, abuse me, or killed me,  
 Since it already has been given for their benefit." (13)

(14) ...

"May others use my body any way they wish,  
 As long as this does not cause any ultimate harm to myself or to them.  
 Since I have completely offered myself to others,  
 May they find in me all they need,  
 And may I never be useless to them." (15)

"May I always relate with every being who encounters me in such a way that,  
 Whether faith or anger arise in him,  
 It becomes the source for fulfilling all his wishes." (16)

“May all those who mock and insult me,  
Or cause me any other harm,  
Have the fortune to fully awaken,  
And may I be the cause of their awakening.” (17)

“May I be a guide for all travelers and a protector for those without one.  
May those who need to be led on the journey to enlightenment,  
Or even only through the ordinary world,  
Find a guide in me.  
May I be a bridge, a boat, and a ship  
For all who wish to cross the water.” (18)

“May I be an island for those who seek rest.  
May I be a lamp for those who are in darkness and look for light.  
May I be a home or a shelter for those who need one,  
And a servant for all who want one. (19)

May I be a wish-fulfilling jewel and a magic vase for all who have various needs.  
May I acquire all the powers of tantric practice and become a perfect practitioner,  
So as to satisfy all those who need to be cured and freed from suffering,  
And so that I too may obtain what I need.  
May I be mantras.  
May I be powerful medicine for all the suffering in the world.  
May I become a wish fulfilling tree.  
May I be a cow of plenty for the world.” (20)

“Just like space and the great elements-earth, water, fire, and air-  
May I become the same precious support for the lives of all the countless creatures.” (21)

“Until they pass away from pain,  
May I also be the source of all life for all the realms of varied beings that reach unto the ends of  
space.” (22)

(22-23) of the third chapter, recited three times, are one formula for receiving the bodhisattva ordination.

(24-25) ...

“Having obtained this human existence, now my life has borne fruit and has been used in the best possible way;

Having generated bodhichitta I have been born in the family of Buddha,  
I am one of Buddha's sons,  
I have within me the seed to become like him." (26)

Whatever we do from now on must be in accord with the family of buddhas. (27)

If we are able to generate bodhichitta, or even just appreciate this precious mind, we will naturally feel happy and joyful. To have come across the teachings of bodhichitta is a fortuitous occurrence that arose due to particular circumstances, like a blind man discovering a lost jewel in a heap of rubbish. (28)

Bodhichitta is like ambrosia,  
The supreme nectar that overcomes the tyranny of death. (29)

Bodhichitta is the inexhaustible treasure that eliminates all poverty in the world.  
It is the supreme medicine that cures the world's diseases.  
It is a refuge in which all beings can find solace and restore their strength in this very life.  
Like wanderers traveling through a wild, arid, and dangerous area who find a leafy tree that give them shelter,  
Bodhichitta is the shelter for those of us who are wandering on the path of conditioned existence. (30)

It is the support and the bridge for all beings who seek a solution to the problems of cyclic existence;  
It alleviates suffering like the radiance of the moon dispels the fever of certain illnesses. (31)

Bodhichitta removes obscurations like the sun dispels the darkness.  
By churning of milk we extract butter,  
Which is quintessential milk;  
Likewise, through study, reflection, and meditation,  
We extract the essence of the ocean of Dharma-bodhichitta. (32)

We and all beings wandering in samsara are looking for happiness and the means to achieve it;  
Bodhichitta is truly the source of both.  
A traveler will gladly stop when he finds food and shelter;  
In the same way, bodhichitta is the best solace and refuge for those who wander in samsara. (33)

In the last stanza of this chapter, the new bodhisattva, who has generated bodhichitta mind and the determination not to abandon it until the attainment of complete enlightenment, and who has promised to succeed in this task for the sake of all beings, invites all beings to this banquet of temporary and ultimate happiness. (34)

\*Note – These verses are taken from Geshe Yeshe Tobden's interpretation of the verses and commentary as they are found in *Shantideva's Guide to Awakening: A Commentary on the Bodhicharyavatara* (Tobden, 2017). Since this does consist of Geshe Yeshe Tobden's commentary not all verses of Chapter 3 are included here. Readers interested in a full version of Chapter 3 should see *The Way of the Bodhisattva* translated by the Padmakara Translation Group (Padmakara Translation Group, 1997).

## Appendix B

*Seven Points and Fifty-Nine Slogans for Generating Compassion and Resilience – As presented*

by Fischer (2012)\*

## POINT ONE

Resolve to Begin

1. Train in the preliminaries.

## POINT TWO

Train in Empathy and Compassion: Absolute Compassion

2. See everything as a dream.
3. Examine the nature of awareness.
4. Don't get stuck on peace.
5. Rest in the openness of mind.
6. In postmeditation be a child of illusion.

## POINT TWO

Train in Empathy and Compassion: Relative Compassion

7. Practice sending and receiving alternately on the breath.
8. Begin sending and receiving practice with yourself.
9. Turn things around (Three objects, three poisons, three virtues).
10. Always train with the slogans.

## POINT THREE

Transform Bad Circumstances into the Path

11. Turn all mishaps into the path.
12. Drive all blames into one.
13. Be grateful to everyone.
14. See confusion as Buddha and practice emptiness.
15. Do good, avoid evil, appreciate your lunacy, pray for help.
16. Whatever you meet is the path.

## POINT FOUR

Make Practice Your Whole life

17. Cultivate a serious attitude (Practice the five strengths).
18. Practice for death as well as for life.



## POINT FIVE

## Assess and Extend

19. There's only one point.
20. Trust your own eyes.
21. Maintain joy (and don't lose your sense of humor).
22. Practice when you're distracted.

## POINT SIX

## The Discipline of Relationship

23. Come back to basics.
24. Don't be a phony.
25. Don't talk about faults.
26. Don't figure others out.
27. Work with your biggest problems first.
28. Abandon hope.
29. Don't poison yourself.
30. Don't be so predictable.
31. Don't malign others.
32. Don't wait in ambush.
33. Don't make everything so painful.
34. Don't unload on everyone.
35. Don't go so fast.
36. Don't be tricky.
37. Don't make gods into demons.
38. Don't rejoice in other's pain.

## POINT SEVEN

## Living with Ease in a Crazy World

39. Keep a single intention.
40. Correct all wrongs with one intention.
41. Begin at the beginning, end at the end.
42. Be patient either way.
43. Observe, even if it costs you everything.
44. Train in three difficulties.
45. Take on the three causes.
46. Don't lose track.
47. Keep the three inseparable.
48. Train wholeheartedly, openly, and constantly.
49. Stay close to your resentment.
50. Don't be swayed by circumstances.

51. This time get it right!
52. Don't misinterpret.
53. Don't vacillate.
54. Be wholehearted.
55. Examine and analyze.
56. Don't wallow.
57. Don't be jealous.
58. Don't be frivolous.
59. Don't expect applause.

\*Note: This rendition is from Fischer's (2012) *Training in Compassion: Zen Teachings on the Practice of Lojong*.