

“In Dreams Begin Responsibilities”

Ethics, Reverie, and Buddhist Worship

Charles Hallisey, Harvard Divinity School

Recent reflections on morality and ethics have expanded the scope of what is considered relevant to understand and explain our moral lives. Narrative, art, evolutionary psychology, and cognitive science have all emerged as resources for moral reflection. Philosophy, especially phenomenology, has likewise contributed to this expansion of what may be considered relevant, particularly as exemplified in the still-growing interest in the ways that the “pre-intentional” is key to whatever experienced meaningfulness of the world we may have.



This talk looks at the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (“Entering the Path of Enlightenment”), a classic text by the great eighth-century Buddhist thinker, Śāntideva, against the hermeneutical backdrop of these expanding horizons for thinking about ethics. Śāntideva begins his work with chapters connected to the Buddhist liturgies of his time, a move that is crucial for understanding the ethical considerations to which his work then turns. This talk will explore the links between worship and ethics and how these invite us to read Śāntideva alongside not only other Buddhist thinkers, but also European philosophers like Gaston Bachelard and Emmanuel Levinas.



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Rita Anne Rollins Building room 501
In the Candler School of Theology Bldg

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