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The Limits of Compassion

Reflections on the ethics of inequality
in Bodhicaryāvatāra chapters 6 & 8

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Read at the level of "teachings" or "doctrines," the Bodhicaryāvatāra defends apparently modern notions of equality. This reading of the text, however, encounters problems when we consider the way the text locates itself between social class and gender as figures of impurity and bondage and philosophical ideas about conventional and absolute truth. In the end we are left wondering what is the accepted social ideal behind the philosophical flourish.



Luis O. Gómez has taught at the universities of Puerto Rico, Washington (Seattle), Michigan (Ann Arbor), Stanford, Ōtani (Kyoto), Hamburg, and at El Colegio de México. He received his Ph.D. in Asian Languages and Literatures at Yale University, and his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Michigan. His research work focuses on canonical Buddhist texts, especially Mahāyāna Sūtras, on the philosophy of the so called medieval period of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India, as well as the origins of Zen (Chan) Buddhism in China and Tibet.