

The transmission of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

The history, diffusion, and influence of a Mahāyāna Buddhist text

by

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Abbreviations

Ash. – Ms. in the Asha archives, Kathmandu; see Yoshizaki (1991).

BCA – *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva (7th Century CE).

BCA₁ – The earlier version of the BCA as preserved in Tibetan translation in BCATib₁.

BCA₂ – The later version of the BCA; see Minayev (1889), etc.

BCABh – *Bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣā*, Newari commentary to the BCA by Ratna Bahādur
Vajrācārya (early 20th Century); see NGMCP E 10/3 and E 1374/25-1375/1.

BCAChi – *Pútíxíng Jīng* 菩提行經 (Chinese translation of BCA) by Tiān Xīzāi 天息災 (985);
see T 1662.

BCAMon – The Mongolian translation of the BCA; see Vladimircov (1929), etc.

BCANew – Newari translation of the BCA; see Divyavajra (1986) and NGMCP E 1375/3, E
1709/5, and E 1789/39.

BCAŚP – *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāraṣaṭtriṃśatapiṇḍārtha* by Dharmapāla (c. 1000 CE) of
Sumatra (abbreviated version of BCA); preserved in Tibetan translation in Tg sha
188a7-191b3.

BCAP – *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* by Prajñākaramatī (10th Century); see La Vallée Poussin
(1901-14).

BCAPiṇ – *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapañjikā* by Dharmapāla (c. 1000 CE) of Dharmapāla (c.
1000 CE) of Sumatra (abbreviated version of BCA); preserved in Tibetan translation
in Tg sha 191b3-192b6.

BCAT – *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭīka*; the title for BCAP ch. 9, when kept separate.

BCATay – *Bodhistw-a Čari-a Awatar-un Tayilbur*, Mongolian commentary to the BCA by
Čosgi Odser (1912).

BCATib – The Tibetan translation of the BCA.

BCATib₁ – The Tibetan translation of BCA₁ preserved in the mss. from Dūnhuáng; see Saito
(1993 and 2000), and the mss. Lon. IOL Tib J 628-630 and Par. Pt. 794.

BCATib₂ – The Tibetan translation of BCA₂ preserved at Tabo monastery; see Saito (1999).

BCATib₃ – The Tibetan translation of BCA₂ preserved in Tg, etc.

BCATIP – *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭīppaṇi* (unknown author); see NGMCP B 23/4.

BCATPVD – *Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanī* by Vibhūtiçhandra's (12th-13th
Century).

BCAV – *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāravivṛttipañjikā* (unknown author); commentary to BCA₁ preserved only in Tibetan translation; see Saito (1993).

BhK – *Bhāvanākrama* by Kamalaśīla (8th Century).

Cam. – Ms. at the Cambridge University Library.

CIHTS – Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

IASW – Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, Stony Brook, New York.

Kol. – Ms. at the Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

Lon. – Ms. at the British Library, London.

Ms. – Manuscript

NE – Nepal Era (*nepāla saṃvat*), the official calendar of Nepal; add 880 years for CE.

NGMCP – Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project.

Par. – Ms. at Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

ŚS – *Śikṣāsamuccaya* by Śāntideva (7th Century CE); see Bendall (1902).

T – *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, Tokyo, 1926-34.

Tg – *bsTan 'gyur* (Derge edition), the *śāstra*-section of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.

Unk. – Ms. of unknown location.

VE – Vikram Era (*vikrama saṃvat*), the calendar initiated by the Indian emperor Vikramaditya (102 BCE-15 CE); subtract 57 years for CE.

Introduction

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (BCA) first came to my attention while studying Buddhism at a Tibetan monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 2002 until 2006.¹ The BCA was an integral part of the education of the Buddhist monks at the monastery, and was also part of the syllabus taught by Tibetan khenpos (*mkhan po*; monk-professor) to the visiting foreign students. The BCA struck me as more easily accessible than a lot of the other texts taught at the monastery, most of them tending to be overly dry and complicated philosophical elaborations. The BCA, on the other hand, engaged my fascination due to its altruistic sentiment, its vivid use of imagery, and its engaging philosophical considerations. The interest remained, and when the possibility opened for me to undertake the writing of a master's thesis there was no doubt in my mind about what topic to choose. The only question was how to approach the text. I began by studying the Sanskrit edition together with its translations into Tibetan and Chinese, as well as the modern translations available in English. The fruit of this initial labour was a quadrilingual edition of the text, with each verse arranged parallel with its equivalent in the other languages. The experiences I drew from reading this, and other multilingual texts, in several seminars organized by Professor Jens Braarvig at the University of Oslo in 2007 and 2008 convinced me to focus on a broader perspective, one that would take into consideration the text as it has been transmitted through various cultures and times, as a vehicle for cultural exchange.

The purpose of the investigation

Much has been written on the BCA. What is then the purpose of yet another contribution? First of all, no work that I am aware of has approached the BCA in a comprehensive manner, taking into account the whole range of areas and languages where the text has had an impact. The text's history in, for instance, Nepal and China have barely been discussed, and its Mongolian translation has, as far as I can see, never left the field of Altaic studies and placed within its broader context. The Sanskrit edition of the BCA is also badly in need of an update, as the handful of manuscripts that were the basis of the first two editions, now over a century old, have been joined by many more discoveries lately. There have also been many works over the past 25 years that has given us a much better understanding of the history and philosophy of the BCA, and an attempt to begin to collect these results and place them in a

¹ During this time I studied for a BA (Hon.) degree in Buddhist Studies at the Centre for Buddhist Studies at the Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling Monastery in Boudhanath, Kathmandu, a centre affiliated with Kathmandu University.

broader perspective can be beneficial for further inquiries. What this thesis then will attempt is to place the BCA in its historical context, to the extent that our present knowledge allows, and to show where and how it has had an impact. It will also expose the many areas where further research is needed, and at least inspire the author to continue his research on this intriguing and influential work of literature. To quote the humble words of the author of the BCA himself:

“There is nothing here that has not been said before, nor have I any skill in composition. Therefore, I have made this not with the intent of other’s benefit, but in order to develop my own mind.”²

Previous work

Since its first introduction on the international scholarly stage in the groundbreaking edition by the Russian Indologist Ivan P. Minayev in 1889, the BCA has been a favourite topic in research on Mahāyāna Buddhism. The first translation into a modern language was begun by the Belgian scholar Louis de la Vallée Poussin in 1892, who translated chapters 1-4 and 10 into French, and since then partial and complete translations have appeared in a range of languages. La Vallée Poussin’s edition of the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (BCAP), a 10th Century commentary to the BCA, begun in 1901 has also been of crucial importance to the research of the BCA in particular, as well as Mahāyāna in general. The many translations published have been supplemented by introductory discussions on the author, the historical role of the text within Mahāyāna Buddhism, and with technical aspects on the language and contents. There has also been done work on particular chapters of the BCA, such as Michael J. Sweets influential doctoral thesis from 1977 which focuses on the 9th chapter. Other works have taken up specific topics from the BCA, such as Paul Williams (2000) who in a range of articles have discussed the philosophical ramifications of particular verses, especially from chapters 8 and 9, or Francis Brassard (2000) who has discussed the ethical aspects of the text. One of the main contributions that have been made lately towards an understanding of the history of the BCA is the several articles by Akira Saito (1993, 1996, 1997, 1999, and 2000) discussing the existence of an earlier and shorter version, now only available in Tibetan translation, which was presumably added to by later editors in India. There are also several articles in Japanese, for instance Ejima (1966) and Ishida (2004), that are important for a

² Minayev (1889: 155); all translations in this thesis are by the author, unless otherwise stated.

broad understanding of the BCA. However, as I do not (yet) read Japanese I have unfortunately not been able to benefit very much from this material.

Sources and methodology

The primary interest of this thesis is to place the BCA in its historical context, and to illustrate its role as a vehicle for cultural exchange. Three main approaches are employed towards this end: the historical, the philological, and the anthropological. Together they paint a picture of a text, and with it a set of ideas, that has travelled through many different cultures, through different eras, and that have affected people in many different ways. The three approaches are intertwined, and it is only through the sum of their contributions that a comprehensive picture can be seen. Historical accounts describe the times and places where the text have existed, first in Northern India, during the “golden age” of Mahāyāna Buddhism, where it was written and later commented on by several known and unknown individuals. The most important and reliable historical accounts describing this period were written by Chinese and Tibetan pilgrims and scholars. Later the text travelled to Nepal, Tibet, China, and Mongolia, and we have to turn to historical accounts mainly written within these areas to learn about the times and circumstances in which the BCA was translated and used.

Perhaps even more important is the philological approach, as it is through the study of the text itself, and the translations that were made, that we can reach an understanding of the reasons for its wide appeal. Many commentaries have been written on the BCA, especially in Tibet, and through these we can learn what the text has meant to people at different times and places. There is also still much work that needs to be done on the abundant, but little studied, manuscripts that have become available as time has gone by. The Sanskrit edition is particularly in need of an update. Since Ivan P. Minayev’s edition which was based on three manuscripts was published in 1889, an abundance of new manuscript material has become available. As the appendix at the end of this thesis shows, close to 60 manuscripts of the Sanskrit BCA have up until now been located in various libraries and collections around the world, but, as will become clear in the following, little further substantial work has been done on these. An integral part of my work on this thesis has been the input and editing of the BCA and its various translations in the newly established database Bibliotheca Polyglotta, a web-based presentation-tool and search-engine for multilingual texts developed by Professor Jens

Braarvig at the University of Oslo.³ It is my intention that, as a result of the discoveries that have been made in connection with writing this thesis, I will eventually be able to publish a new and thoroughly researched critical edition of the Sanskrit BCA on this web-site.

The results of this thesis are also based upon observations of the way the BCA has influenced, and still today is influencing, Buddhist practitioners and others. A chapter is devoted to a lecture that was given by the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (*bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho*; 1935-), at Sarnath near Varanasi in January 2009. At this event 26000 people—Indians, Tibetans, and a range of foreigners—came to listen to a presentation and explanation of the BCA given everyday over the course of a week. They were introduced to the basic ideas of the BCA, and could optionally take a vow with the Dalai Lama pledging that they would live according to the guidelines set forth in the text. The transmission of this vow follows an age old tradition upheld in Tibet, presumably dating back to the author of the BCA himself, and highlights that the tradition of the BCA is not just literal, but that the text is primarily a recipe for the ethical and social ideas fundamental to Buddhism meant to be used actively. I have also had meetings and interactions with individuals that are members of the communities and traditions where the BCA is influential, and these meetings have been enriched my understanding of the BCA's influence in these various settings.

The theme of scriptural authority has been important throughout the work I have done on the BCA. It has been interesting to note that such a late composition—it was presumably authored in the 7th Century CE—has gained such an important position within various Buddhist communities, a position perhaps most often reserved for the statements made by the founders of a religion. It has, especially within the Tibetan tradition, attained a status that could be described as canonical, but there is not a sign of an attempt to attribute the text to for instance the Buddha Śākyamuni, which one could perhaps expect if the wish was to establish its authority once and for all. In this respect I have benefited from the observations made by Ronald M. Davidson (1990) in his article “An Introduction to the Standards of Scriptural Authenticity in Indian Buddhism.” Davidson has shown how, one is tempted to say, the anarchistic structure of the Buddhist community encouraged innovations. The incorporation of new developments into the canon started very early, first with production of the *abhidharma* (metaphysical) literature. The primary requirement for a *dharma* (teaching) to be

³ <https://husmann.uio.no/polyglotta>.

authentic *buddhavacana* (word of the Buddha) was first of all that it was conducive for *nirvāṇa* (final emancipation), the goal of early Buddhism. The Buddha is also said to have opposed a suggestion from some monks to render his teachings into a formal language, instead encouraging his followers to make his words available to all in their own tongue.⁴ This liberal approach in some sense led the way to the innovative and rich development that would characterise Indian Buddhism for over one and a half millennium. It paved the way for the fundamental influence a relatively late Indian Buddhist composition such as the BCA could have throughout the lands where Mahāyāna Buddhism travelled.

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

Before we begin to trace its history, the text itself needs a proper introduction.

Bodhicaryāvatāra, the title of the work, translates as “*An Introduction to the Conduct of Awakening*.” In the Tibetan and Mongolian⁵ translations the Sanskrit title is given as *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*, which translates as “*An Introduction to the Conduct of the Bodhisattva* (the being/hero destined for awakening).” It may well be argued that the prior title is merely a short version of the latter. All available Sanskrit manuscripts of the text, however, give the shorter title,⁶ and we will therefore use that title here, abbreviated BCA. As Akira Saito has shown in a series of articles⁷ there seems to have existed two versions of the BCA. The presumably older of the two, BCA₁, is only extant in a Tibetan translation (BCATib₁), and was found among the manuscripts discovered in the caves at Dūnhuáng in the beginning of the 20th Century.⁸ This version consists of nine chapters with a total of 701.5/702.5 verses.⁹ The later version, BCA₂, is the one found in all other sources,¹⁰ and consists of ten chapters with a total of 912/913 verses.¹¹ The difference in number of chapters is due to chapter two having been divided into two separate chapters in the later version. The

⁴ Davidson (1990: 292).

⁵ But not, necessarily, in the Chinese, where the title is given as *Pútíng Jīng* 菩提行經.

⁶ The available manuscripts that have been located in connection with this thesis are listed in the appendix.

⁷ Saito (1993, 1997, 1999, 2000); other contributions have been Ishida (1988) and Kajihara (1992).

⁸ There are four mss. containing parts of this text: Lon. IOL Tib J 628-630 and Par. Pt. 794. These will be discussed further in the chapter on Tibet.

⁹ This version has been edited in Saito (1993 and 2000); the ms. Lon. IOL Tib J 629 contains one extra verse in chapter seven that the other mss., Lon. IOL Tib J 628, 630, and Par. Pt. 794, do not have.

¹⁰ This is found in all Sanskrit mss. listed in the appendix, in the canonical translation preserved in the Tibetan canon (Tg), and in the Mongolian and Chinese translations. It is presumably also this edition that is found in the Newari translation, but this has not been verified. The Sanskrit version has been edited in Minayev (1889) and La Vallée Poussin (1902-14).

¹¹ In some editions verse 9.20 seems to have been partially repeated, probably due to scribal errors, causing these versions to have one extra verse. The Chinese translation contains less verses due to parts of ch. 2, and the whole of chapters 3 and 4 being left out. This will be discussed in the chapter on China.

verses that have been added in the later edition are partly quotes from other texts, added to clarify certain points, or to elaborate. Many of these verses are taken from Śāntideva's other work, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (ŚS), perhaps inserted by a later editor.¹² The BCA seems to have been composed as a text to be recited by practitioners, and this is the reason why the first person singular is used quite frequently. The verses that have been added later, however, break the flow of the work in certain places. Arguments have also been elaborated upon to the extent that they have become more difficult to understand than was first intended. The chart below shows the chapter-titles and number of verses of each chapter in the two editions of the BCA, as well as the Tibetan (BCATib₃),¹³ Chinese (BCAChi),¹⁴ and Mongolian (BCAMon)¹⁵ canonical translations. The translations will be discussed separately in later chapters.¹⁶

	BCA ₁		BCA ₂	BCATib ₃	BCAChi	BCAMon
Ch. 1: untitled	36	Ch. 1: Bodhicittānuśaṃsa (Praise of the mind of awakening)	36	36	35	36
Ch. 2: Bodhicittaparigraha (Adopting the mind of awakening)	98	Ch. 2: Pāpadeśanā (Confession of sin)	66	65	13	65
Ch. 3: Nairātmya (Selflessness)	48	Ch. 3: Bodhicittaparigraha (Adopting the mind of awakening)	33	33,5	0	33
Ch. 4: Samprajanyarakṣaṇā (Guarding Awareness)	94	Ch. 4: Bodhicittāpramāda (Vigilance regarding the mind of awakening)	48	48	0	48
Ch. 5: Kṣānti (Forbearance)	127	Ch. 5: Samprajanyarakṣaṇā (Guarding awareness)	109	109	105	109
Ch. 6: Vīrya (Enthusiasm)	84	Ch. 6: Kṣāntipāramitā (Perfection of patience)	134	134	133	134
Ch. 7: Dhyāna (Meditative absorption)	58/59	Ch. 7: Vīryapāramitā (Perfection of enthusiasm)	75	76	76	76
Ch. 8: Prajñā (Transcendent wisdom)	90.5	Ch. 8: Dhyānapāramitā (Perfection of meditative absorption)	186	187	182	187
Ch. 9: Pariṇāmanā (Dedication)	66	Ch. 9: Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of transcendent wisdom)	167/168	167	166	167
		Ch. 10: Pariṇāmanā (Dedication)	58	57,5	57	58
Total	701.5/702.5		912/913	913	767	913

¹² Crosby (1996: xxxii-xxxiii).

¹³ Tg la 1b1-40a7.

¹⁴ T 1662.

¹⁵ As edited in Rachewiltz (1996).

¹⁶ When referring to the chapters of the BCA it is mainly the chapters of the later edition, the BCA₂, that are used throughout the thesis.

The BCA is written in classic Sanskrit verse, and the beauty of its poetry has been emphasised by many who have written about it.¹⁷ This is not, however, necessarily because of the technical apparatus employed, but just as much the contents, showing a sentiment of unconditional compassion for all beings that have touched many. The verse structure is quite basic, and the bulk of the text is written in the *anuṣṭubh*-metre. This is a simple verse structure with eight syllables per *pāda*,¹⁸ each verse line consisting of two *pādas*, and where only six of the total 16 syllables are of fixed weight.¹⁹ An example of this is found in verse 1.15 (with the rhythm illustrated below):

tad bodhicittaṃ dvividhaṃ vijñātavyaṃ samāsataḥ |
bodhipraṇidhicittaṃ ca bodhiprasthānam eva ca ||²⁰
 ----- ♪ ----- ♪ |
 ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ||

Other and more complicated verse structures are also used in between, both even (*samacatuṣpadī*) and semi-even (*ardhasamacatuṣpadī*). The longest verses are found in the 10th chapter, where the dedications of merit are elaborated upon in lengthy verse-lines, giving the reader a feeling of abundance in the amount of merit accrued. In verse 10.11 we hear of the powerful bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, conqueror of the servants of death (*yamapuruṣa*), and the benefits accrued from turning towards him:²¹

trastāḥ paśyantv akasmād iha yamapuruṣāḥ kākaḡḡdhrās ca ghorāḥ dhvāntaṃ
dhvastaṃ samantāt sukharatijanāṃ kasya saumyā prabheyam |
ity ūrdhvaṃ prekṣamāṇā gaganatalagataṃ vajrapāṇiṃ jvalantaṃ dṛṣṭvā
prāmodyavegād vyapagataduritā yāṃ tu tenaiva sārdham ||²²
 ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ----- ♪ |
 ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ----- ♪ ||

¹⁷ Crosby (1996: xxxviii).

¹⁸ *Pāda* means a foot, and is the equivalent of half a verse line. The translation “foot” should therefore be avoided when discussing Sanskrit versification. Each verse consists of two verse lines, i.e. four *pādas*; see Coulson (2002: 211-226).

¹⁹ The weight of the syllable is a central component of Sanskrit verse structure. A short vowel, or consonant and a short vowel together, form a light syllable (♪), while any syllable longer than that is heavy (-). A complete verse in the *anuṣṭubh*-metre has the structure: | o o o o o o | o o o ♪ - ♪ | o o o o o o | o o o ♪ - ♪ || (The sign o indicates an optional syllable).

²⁰ Minayev (1889: 156).

²¹ This is an even metre of the *sragdharā* type with 21 (7+7+7) syllables per *pāda*.

²² Minayev (1889: 222).

The BCA contains a recipe for how to live the life of a bodhisattva, a being who has pledged to practice the path of awakening for the benefit of all beings. The chapters are constructed in a gradual manner, a step-by-step procedure leading the practitioner through mental practices of devotion, meditation, and insight. The first chapter is a presentation of the attitude needed to begin the practice of a bodhisattva. This attitude is called *bodhicitta*, the mind of awakening, and has a theoretical (*bodhipraṇidhicittaṃ*) and practical (*bodhiprasthānam*) aspect, as presented in verse 1.15 above. It is described as a rare and fragile attitude, as rare and transitory as lightning that illuminates the night (verse 1.6), but also as immensely powerful for overcoming evil (verse 1.14). The next chapter, the one that has been divided into two chapters in the later edition, is a manual for the practice of supreme devotion (*anuttarapūjā*) which traditionally consists of seven parts.²³ In the BCA it consists of nine parts: worship (*pūjā*), going for refuge (*śaraṇagamana*), confession of faults (*pāpadeśanā*), rejoicing in merit (*anumodanā*), requesting the teaching (*adhyeṣaṇā*), begging the Buddhas not to abandon beings (*yācanā*), dedication of merit (*pariṇāmanā*), and arousal of the mind of awakening (*bodhicittotpāda*). Verses from this chapter have frequently been used in ceremonies, such as the ceremony for receiving the bodhisattva's vow.²⁴ The next six chapters deal in general with the six perfections (*pāramitā*) that a bodhisattva must master: generosity (*dāna*), discipline (*śīla*), patience (*kṣānti*), enthusiasm (*vīrya*), meditative absorption (*dhyāna*), and transcendent wisdom (*prajñā*). The two first chapters, however, do not in fact deal with generosity and discipline directly, but with practicing humility (*nairātmya*) and awareness (*samprajanya*), two characteristics necessary towards that end. The text is written as practical instructions in how to go about nurturing these qualities. The chapter on transcendent wisdom is quite technical, especially in the latter version where a lot of extra material has been added, and is mainly concerned with refuting misconceptions held by other philosophical schools, and, in the Mādhyamika view, "lesser" Buddhist schools. The last chapter concludes elaborately by dedicating the merit accrued to the benefit of all beings.

²³ This has been discussed in detail in Crosby (1996: 9-13).

²⁴ This will be discussed in the chapter that presents a teaching on the BCA by the 14th Dalai Lama.

1. India

There are few reliable sources for the history of the BCA in India. India has not had the same tradition for writing historical accounts of dynasties, religious establishments, etc., as for instance the Chinese and Tibetans, and it has not been uncommon for scholars of Indian Buddhism to have to rely on travel accounts by Chinese pilgrims, such as Xuánzàng (602-664), or descriptions written by later Tibetan historians, such as Tāranātha (1575-1608), when reconstructing the actual history of a tradition deeply rooted in myth and hagiography. Moreover, Buddhism more or less gradually died out as a separate religious tradition in India in the 13th-15th centuries, partially, it has been argued, due to the introduction of Islam.²⁵ Therefore, the large and influential movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism that prospered in India for over a millennium has not been preserved in any living Indian tradition up to the present, with one very important exception being the Newar community in Kathmandu, Nepal. This last case will be presented separately in the next chapter. What follows then, as a description of the history of the BCA in India, is based mainly on Tibetan sources that have preserved accounts of the life of the presumed author of the BCA, Śāntideva, as well as several Indian commentaries on the BCA in Tibetan translation. Some ms. material has also fortunately been preserved in Sanskrit, but a lot of it has not received its due attention yet. Issues relating to this will be discussed in the later chapter on manuscripts.

Most sources agree that the author of the BCA was a monk by the name of Śāntideva (7th Century CE).²⁶ Two sources, however, disagree. The Chinese translation (BCAChi) accredits it to Nāgārjuna (2nd Century CE),²⁷ philosopher and purported founder of the Mādhyamika branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It has been somewhat of a tradition, though, both in the Chinese and Tibetan traditions for accrediting Nāgārjuna with a lot more literary works than he could possibly have authored. This statement need not therefore be taken too seriously.²⁸

²⁵ See for instance Jensen (1994: 428).

²⁶ These sources included all Sanskrit mss. of the BCA that have been checked, the Sanskrit account of Śāntideva's life found in the ms. Kol. G. 9990, the Tibetan canonical translation as found for instance in Tg, as well as several Tibetan accounts of Śāntideva's life story, which will be discussed further below.

²⁷ See T 1662 543c18-23.

²⁸ Lancaster (1979: K 1121), a catalogue of the Chinese Buddhist canon, states that Śāntideva is the author, but that Nāgārjuna has written the verses. As the whole text is in verses it is difficult to see how this statement should be understood. It can be mentioned though that the Dūnhuáng ms. Lon. IOL Tib J 628, a Tibetan

The other source that gives a different name is the BCATib₁, the Tibetan translation of the BCA₁ executed around 800 CE.²⁹ This translation reports that the author was Akṣayamati (*Blo gros myi zad pa*), and this attribution has been discussed in some detail in Saito (1993). Saito has reached the conclusion that Akṣayamati was in fact an epithet applied to Śāntideva.³⁰ On the occasion of Śāntideva's first public recitation of the BCA the members of the audience were so impressed that they exclaimed that this excellent teacher must be the bodhisattva Akṣayamati himself. It should also be noted that another work by Śāntideva, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (ŚS), quotes extensively from the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* (Akṣ), indicating that Śāntideva himself had a personal relationship with this bodhisattva.³¹ Being reasonably convinced that Śāntideva was in fact the author of the BCA, we turn now to the task of reconstructing an account of who this person was.

Śāntideva

Scholars have not been able to reach any agreement concerning the exact dating of Śāntideva. In the extant biographies he is said to have been the student of Jayadeva, who is known to have been the successor of Dharmapāla (c. 529-60 CE) as abbot (*upādhyāya*) at the great monastic university of Nālandā in the present state of Bihar, India. Moreover, the earliest known quote from the BCA is found in Śāntarakṣita's (c. 725-88) *Tattvasiddhi*. It is therefore generally agreed that he must have lived sometime between the middle of the 6th and the middle of the 8th Century, but more exact dates have varied with almost every new publication related to Śāntideva.³² In the absence of more accurate evidence, and as a working proposition for the present purposes, I think it safe to suggest that he lived during the 7th Century CE. Concerning the details of his life we have to rely on the works attributed to him and the biographies that have been transmitted by the tradition. The accounts of his life are hagiographic in character, painting an idealized picture with elements that are reminiscent of other accounts of great Buddhist personalities. They can therefore not be read literally, but as

translation of BCA₁, begins the text with a quote from Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MMK); see Garfield (1995) for a translation of the MMK.

²⁹ A discussion of this translation in relation to the canonical Tibetan translation found in the Tg (BCATib₃) will be discussed in the chapter on Tibet.

³⁰ Saito (1993: 6-7).

³¹ See Braarvig (1993, vol. II) for Akṣ; Braarvig (1993, vol. II: l-li) gives a short discussion of the Bodhisattva Akṣayamati; for a list of the quotes from Akṣ in ŚS see Braarvig (1993, vol. II: lv).

³² Clayton (2006: 32) summarizes the various dates proposed: Tāranātha (?): c. 650; Bhattacharya [in Krishnamacharya (1926)]: c. 691-743; Pezzali (1968): 685-763; Ruegg (1981): c. 700; Saito (1996): 725-65.

documentation of how Śāntideva was revered, and what he has meant to the tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Still, there is no need to disregard them completely as historical evidence, and they may well be giving us some accurate information regarding the individual himself.

There are primarily four accounts of Śāntideva's life-story that have been employed by modern scholarship. These four are quoted in full in Pezzali (1968), and were written by Vibhūticandra (12th-13th Century), Bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364), Tāranātha (1575-1608), and Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-1777).³³ The first, and the oldest account available, is extant both in Sanskrit and Tibetan,³⁴ while the last three are Tibetan indigenous works. These sources have been narrated in several publications concerned with Śāntideva's works and philosophy, so that his life-story is now almost as famous within academic Buddhist scholarship as it is within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.³⁵ There are some slight variations on details between the accounts, and in the following abbreviated account of Śāntideva's life I base myself mainly on Vibhūticandra's version. A few variations between this and the Tibetan accounts will be mentioned as they have become important within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Śāntideva was born as the son of the king Mañjuvarman of Saurāṣṭra, in the modern state of Gujarat. At the time when he was to ascend the throne his mother warned him against the worldly life of a ruler by bathing him in scalding hot water, saying that such a life would lead to much worse suffering than that. She advised him to leave and take up a life of religion, and suggested that he seek out the teacher Mañjuvajra in Bhaṅgala (Bengal). He set out, and was helped by a young girl, who was in fact the goddess Tārā, to find the teacher, and stayed with Mañjuvajra, who was in fact the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, studying for 12 years. During his stay there he had visions of Mañjuśrī, and developed a strong relationship with this bodhisattva.

³³ There are also accounts found in the commentaries of dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (1504-1566) [see Brunhölzl (2004)], Kun bzangs dpal ldan (1862-1943) [see Kretschmar (2003-)], and others.

³⁴ Jong (1975) showed that the Sanskrit account given by Pezzali (1968) was in fact the same as that found in the introduction to Vibhūticandra's *Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanī* (BCATPVD) found in Tibetan translation in Tg sha 192b4-285a7; the Sanskrit version is found in the ms. Kol. G. 9990.

³⁵ The biography of Śāntideva is recounted, among others, in Minayev (1889: 226-228), La Vallée Poussin (1892: 70-75), Hara Prasad Śāstri (1913), Finot (1920: 11-13), Pezzali (1968: 3-45), Jong (1975), Sweet (1977: 2-3), Crosby (1996: vi-x), Brassard (2000: 15-17), Brunhölzl (2004: 601-603), and Clayton (2006: 33-36).

His teacher then advised him to go to Madhyadeśa, and there he went into the service of a king named Pañcamasiṃha, and took the name Acalasena. Śāntideva carried a wooden sword, and some jealous co-ministers told the king this, complaining that carrying such a weapon was quite useless when protecting the king. The king ordered Śāntideva to show him the sword, and he did so, on the premise that the king should cover one eye. The brilliant lustre of the sword caused the uncovered eye of the king to fall out. The king was curiously pleased by this feat, realizing what a powerful figure Śāntideva must be, and implored him to stay. Śāntideva refused, and instead left for the monastery of Nālandā, where he became a monk and received the name Śāntideva (“lord of calm”), because of his high level of tranquillity. He was also given the name Bhusuku due to his ability to remain in meditative concentration (*samādhi*) while eating (*bhuñjāna*), sleeping (*supta*), and while in his hut (*kuṭī*). The Tibetan tradition, however, differs on this point. They say that the name Bhusuku was given to Śāntideva because it seemed that all he did was to eat, sleep, and defecate, and that the other monks were quite angry at him for giving the order a bad reputation. This version is reminiscent of the stories of the great tantric adepts (*mahāsiddha*) who outwardly seem quite ordinary, but who secretly are actually great masters. It is also one of the favourite twists of the story for Tibetans, and when recounting it a teacher will typically be grinning broadly when reaching this point of the story. The other monks at Nālandā wished to test Śāntideva, according to the Tibetan version they wished to him humiliated and expelled, and a very lofty seat was erected for him to teach on. Śāntideva, to the amazement of all, ascended the seat with ease, and asked them whether they wished to hear an old composition or something new. When requested to teach something new he decided that the BCA would fit the circumstances well, and began to recite. When he reached verse 9.34, the verse summarizing the view of the 9th chapter, saying ”When neither existence nor non-existence appears to the mind, since there is no other mode of operation, without grasping, it becomes tranquil,”³⁶ Mañjuśrī appeared in front of him, and they ascended into the sky and disappeared. The Tibetan account reports that his voice could still be heard. Seeing their mistake the monks felt remorse, and in Śāntideva’s hut they found his three compositions, the BCA, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (ŚS), and the *Sūtrasamuccaya*. The Tibetan account goes on describing further miracles Śāntideva

³⁶ Minayev (1889: 210): *yadā na bhāvo nābhāvo mateḥ saṃtiṣṭhate puraḥ | tadānyagatyabhāvena nirālambā praśāmyati ||*

performed in other places, and finally that he renounced the monastic life and lived the life of a wandering yogin, practicing Vajrayāna in many unconventional ways.

The ŚS is extant in both Sanskrit and Tibetan,³⁷ and is a sort of compendium of quotes from Mahāyāna literature. The *Sūtrasamuccaya* has however not been found.³⁸ Concerning Śāntideva's tantric affiliations it has been suggested by Bendall (1902) that the ŚS actually shows some tantric influence. Hara Prasad Śāstri (1913) also notes that there are tantric works that are attributed to Śāntideva, as well as several works attributed to Bhusuku, one of Śāntideva's other names. Although no conclusion has of yet been reached concerning this, it need not be unlikely that Śāntideva was also involved in Vajrayāna practices given the proposed time period he lived in. There is a further twist in the Tibetan account that relates how there appeared three different accounts of the BCA. The monks present had memorized what Śāntideva recited, and in the end it appeared that the Kashmiri scholars had memorized more than a thousand verses, but had missed the verses of homage in the beginning. The scholars from Eastern India had memorized only 700 verses, missing the homage, as well as the second and ninth chapters. The scholars from Central India were missing the homage and the tenth chapter. They decided to go and ask Śāntideva which was the correct version, and he declared that it was the one memorized by the scholars from Central India. It seems likely that this account was a later Tibetan addition to explain the discrepancies between the earlier (BCA₁) and later (BCA₂) editions of the text, as both these editions reached Tibet and there was some confusion about which was the correct one.³⁹

The Indian commentators

Ten works related to the BCA have been preserved in the *bsTan 'gyur* (Tg), the commentarial section of Tibetan Buddhist canon.⁴⁰ Of these only two have partially been preserved in Sanskrit, the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (BCAP)⁴¹ by Prajñākaramati (10th Century) and the

³⁷ Bendall (1903) and Tg khi 3a2-194b5.

³⁸ Clayton (2006: 36-38) discusses this missing work in some detail.

³⁹ See Saito (1997); the Tibetan translation process is discussed in detail below.

⁴⁰ According to Saito (1997: 79) Bu ston mentioned two additional commentaries in his first index to the Tibetan canon, but these were not included in the final version of Tg; Ejima (1966) contains a discussion of the different commentaries on the BCA, but as this article is in Japanese I have not been able to benefit from its discussion; according to Brunhölzl (2004: 611) Tibetan sources say that there existed more than one hundred Indian commentaries on the BCA.

⁴¹ La Vallée Poussin (1901-14) and Tg la 41b1-288a7.

Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanī (BCATPVD)⁴² by Vibhūticandra (12th-13th Century). The last of these were mentioned above, as only the introduction containing the biography of Śāntideva is preserved. In addition to this there is one anonymous commentary extant in Sanskrit that was first noted by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14), the *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭippaṇi* (BCAṬIP).⁴³ No work has until now been done on this text, and a preliminary analysis of it will be presented in the chapter on manuscripts below. Two of the works in the Tg are actually abbreviations of the BCA, and they will be treated under a separate headline below. Only a few details are known about the authors of the commentaries that are signed. Their names and the little we know about them, are the only reliable information we have for the history of the BCA in India after Śāntideva.

What seems to be the earliest commentary preserved is the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāravivṛtīpañjikā* (BCAV),⁴⁴ but its author is not known.⁴⁵ The *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāravivṛtī*⁴⁶ is in fact equivalent to chapters eight and nine of the BCAV, and these two can therefore be considered the same work. Saito (1993) has edited chapter nine of this commentary, and has reached the conclusion that it is a commentary to the BCA₁. As it is the only commentary to this earlier edition of the BCA, it is therefore of crucial importance in our understanding of the history of the BCA, and is a testament to the fact that there was in fact an earlier version of the BCA which was later added to. The most famous commentary, and the one most relied upon both in Tibet and in modern scholarship, is Prajñākaramati's BCAP. We know that this commentator was a member of Vikramaśīlā monastery in present Bihar, and that he was the contemporary of Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrīmitra, and Nāḍapāda (Nāropā).⁴⁷ He is also widely considered to have been a proponent of the Prāsaṅgika branch of Mādhyamika philosophy, in an era mostly dominated by the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika branch, and is one of the main

⁴² Ms. Kol. G. 9990 and Tg sha 192b4-285a7.

⁴³ Ms. NGMCP B 23/4.

⁴⁴ Tg la 288b1-349a7.

⁴⁵ Brunhölzl (2004: 611) suggests that Dānaśīla might have written this work. He gives no reference for this suggestion. If so it is possible that this is the same Dānaśīla mentioned by Tāranātha as a contemporary of King Gopāla (r. c. 750-770/775), and perhaps the one who, according to Ruegg (1981-117), collaborated with dPal brtseg (the translator of BCATib₁) and dPal 'byor snying po in the translation of the *Hastavālavṛtī*, and with Jinamitra, Śīlendrabodhi and Ye shes sde in the translation of Candrakīrti's *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtī*.

⁴⁶ Tg sha 178a7-188a7.

⁴⁷ Ruegg (1981: 116); Nāḍapāda was a major figure in the lineage of teachings that developed into the bKa' brgyud sect in Tibet.

reasons why Śāntideva is considered to belong to the Prāsaṅgika branch. However, as Saito (1996) has pointed out, based on an analysis of the BCA₁, we can not be too careful when applying this label to Śāntideva.

Kṛṣṇapāda (10th-11th Century) wrote the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāraduravabodhanirṇayanāmagranthā*⁴⁸, which is a short commentary dealing with some chosen passages from the BCA that are difficult to understand. Kṛṣṇapāda also wrote several other works on Mādhyamika, and is known to have been one of the teachers of Atiśa Dipaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE) who was an important figure in the popularization of the BCA in Tibet.⁴⁹ Kalyāṇadeva (11th Century?) wrote the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārasaṃskāra*,⁵⁰ but nothing further is known about this figure. Vairocanarakṣita (11th Century) wrote the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapañjikā*,⁵¹ and was a contemporary of Atiśa at Vikramaśīla. Ishida (2004)⁵² discusses the life and works of Vairocanarakṣita, suggesting that he shows some affinity with Prajñākaramati as they both wrote commentaries on the BCA, the ŚS, and the *Śikṣyalekha* by Candragomin (620-680). He is also said to have been the student of Abhāyakaragupta (d. 1125) who was an important contributor to the theory of Buddhanature (*tathāgatagarbha*). The last known author of a commentary is Vibhūticandra (12th-13th Century), who wrote the BCATPVD. He was originally from Varendra, was affiliated with the monastery of Jagaddala located in what is today Bangladesh, and was one of the scholars who accompanied the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrībhadra (1127-1225 or 1145-1243) to Tibet in 1204. There is also a commentary to chapter nine only by an unknown author, the *Prajñāparicchedapañjikā*.⁵³ We can also add to this information that Tiān Xīzāi (Devaśāntika?; d. 1000) from the Tamasāvana Saṅgārama (?) in Jālandhara, Kashmir, brought the BCA₂ to China and translated in there in 985 CE.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Text no. 5277 in the Beijing edition of the *bsTan 'gyur*.

⁴⁹ He was perhaps also, as Atiśa, related to the monastic university of Vikramaśīla.

⁵⁰ Tg sha 1b1-90b3.

⁵¹ Tg sha 90b5-159a3.

⁵² This article is in Japanese, and has therefore only been of limited help to me.

⁵³ Tg sha 159a3-178a1.

⁵⁴ Tiān Xīzāi and the Chinese translation will be further discussed in the chapter on China below.

Two abbreviated versions

In addition to the commentaries there are also two abbreviated versions attributed to Dharmapāla (or Dharmakīrti; c. 1000 CE) of Suvarṇadvīpa (Sumatra), the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāraṣaṭtriṃśatapiṇḍārtha* (BCAṢP)⁵⁵ and the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapīṇḍārtha* (BCAPīṇ).⁵⁶ These texts have been treated in Eimer (1981). Dharmapāla is said to have been born in a royal family on the island of Suvarṇadvīpa, and received the name Senasena (Tib. *si na si na*). He travelled to India where he met his teacher Mahāśrīratna, and was there given the name Dharmakīrti, which is the name he is known by in the biography of Atiśa.⁵⁷ He was famed for his erudition, and many disciples came from India to visit him. It is not certain whether he went back to Suvarṇadvīpa, and people came from India to visit him there, or whether he stayed on in Northern India and taught there. He was one of Atiśa's main teachers, and it was he who brought the two abbreviations to Tibet, and had them translated and popularized there. Relics of Dharmapāla are also said to have been brought to Tibet and kept at Reting (*rwa sgrenḡ*) Monastery, north of Lhasa. The two abbreviated versions contain exclusively verses from the BCA, around 80 and 30 verses respectively. Almost all of the verses in the shorter BCAPīṇ is also contained in the BCAṢP, and the latter can therefore be considered an enlarged version of the former.⁵⁸ Dharmapāla is considered to belong to the lineage of mental purification practice (*blo 'byong*),⁵⁹ and the texts were apparently meant to be used for meditation practices where it would be inconvenient to recite the whole BCA.

Judging from the amount of commentaries, and the temporal (8th-13th Century) and geographical (Kashmir to Bangladesh and Sumatra) span, the BCA was clearly very popular and influential throughout the 500 last years of the history of Buddhism in India. This was probably the case due to its versatile nature, as it has elements of devotion, of moral instruction, as well as complicated philosophical considerations. It could be used both as a guide for meditation and as a subject of philosophical debate. Its centrality in later Indian Buddhism is also illustrated by the fact that it made its way to all the countries that imported

⁵⁵ Tg sha 188a7-191b3.

⁵⁶ Tg sha 191b3-192b6.

⁵⁷ The works attributed to him are on the other hand signed Dharmapāla.

⁵⁸ Eimer (1981: 77); the opposite is not the case, as Eimer points out that the colophon of the shorter version has been added to in the longer version.

⁵⁹ See the further discussion of this in the chapter on Tibet below.

the Mahāyāna style of Buddhism—Nepal, Tibet, China,⁶⁰ and Mongolia—and it is to each of these areas that we turn next in order to trace the BCA’s later history.⁶¹

2. Nepal

“It is a curious fact that scholars interested in Mahāyāna Buddhism in India have paid so little attention to Nepal—indeed it may actually be perverse.”

Gregory Schopen⁶²

Nepal has played an invaluable role in modern Buddhist scholarship. The large majority of Sanskrit manuscript material that has been preserved and made available to scholars has come from Nepal. Most of those made available during the early period of Buddhist scholarship in the 19th Century were collected by Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894), British resident to Nepal in the years 1820-1843, and distributed to libraries in India and Europe.⁶³ Among these were several manuscripts of the BCA. Still more continue to be discovered in Nepal, for instance through the work of the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP).⁶⁴ The indigenous Buddhism of Nepal, that of the Newars⁶⁵ of the Kathmandu Valley, has on the other hand received little attention, as Gregory Schopen laments in the above quote. One reason for this was that Nepal was largely sealed off from foreigners until 1951, when king Tribhuvan returned to power. Another and more important reason seems to have been a general assessment of Newar Buddhism as a degenerate form of Buddhism, a form that under the strong influence of Hinduism surrendered to the caste system and a hollow ritualistic form of Vajrayāna, lacking the intellectual capacity of the much more highly acclaimed Tibetan Buddhism. This view has fortunately been adjusted in recent times, and, for instance, Lewis (2000) paints a picture of the Newar Buddhists as a lively community serving as a last

⁶⁰ Including Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, which were countries that also employed the Chinese Buddhist canon.

⁶¹ The BCA has had somewhat of a renaissance in India in the last century, partly due to the development of Indian historical scholarship, and the BCA has now been translated both into Hindi [Shastri (1955), Tripathi (1989), Sharma (1990), and Simha (1993)] and Bengali [Mukhopādhyāya (1962)].

⁶² Lewis (2000: ix).

⁶³ These mss. will be further discussed in the chapter on manuscripts of the BCA.

⁶⁴ The NGMCP and its work will be presented in the chapter on manuscripts.

⁶⁵ “Newar”, linked with the Sanskrit *nepāla* and the modern name for the country of Nepal, is a word of Tibeto-Burman origins. According to Lienhard (1988: ix) it is related with Tibeto-Burman *nhet.pǎ* (*ṅepǎ*) which means “cow-herd”, thus corresponding to Skt. *gopāla* (“cow-herd”), and it is noteworthy that the first historically recorded dynasty of Nepal was that of the Gopālas.

surviving oasis and unique link to the later Buddhism of Northern India. Judging from the relatively abundant manuscript remains, the BCA seems to have had an important place in Newar Buddhism. No work that I know of has dealt with this in particular, so it is previously uncharted territory that this chapter is presenting. Based on the manuscript remains, and some historical assumptions, we will here try to present what on reasonable grounds can be said of the history of the BCA in Nepal. To specify, early historical references to Nepal usually refer to the cultures and kingdoms centred in the Kathmandu Valley and the immediate surroundings. The modern state of Nepal was a result of the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley by the Gorkha dynasty in 1768, and land grants later given to these by the British administration of India. The official language of Nepal today, the Indo-European Nepali, was likewise originally the language of the Gorkhas, and is not directly related with the Tibeto-Burman Newari.

Early traces

The Newars were a people of Tibeto-Burman origins who presumably emigrated from the East or North-East towards what is today the Kathmandu Valley long before the Licchavi-period (about 400-880 CE).⁶⁶ Under the influence of Indian culture they were converted to Hinduism and Buddhism, and became famed even beyond their valley for their skills as traders and artisans. From the 7th Century CE and onwards the road taken by most Indian Buddhist missionaries to the newly converted Buddhist kingdom of Tibet went through the Kathmandu Valley. The first presence then of the BCA in the valley, that can be accounted for with some sense of historical certainty, is the fact that the BCA was brought to Tibet, probably through the Kathmandu Valley, and translated there some time around 800 CE by the duo Sarvajñādeva and Ka ba dPal brtseg.⁶⁷ These are speculations, but the fact that the text was important enough to be brought to Tibet and included among the exclusive new religious imports at this early time shows that it must have had a high status. A status we can expect it also had within the Buddhism of the Kathmandu Valley.

A more certain presence of the BCA in the valley happens during what is referred to as the transitional period (879-1200 CE), with the arrival in 1040 of the monk Atiśa

⁶⁶ Lienhard (1988: ix); the dynasty of this period was probably called Licchavi due to a claim of family relationship with the ancient Indian aristocratic family of the same name that ruled a small kingdom in the central Ganges valley at the time of Śākyamuni Buddha.

⁶⁷ See for instance Ruegg (1981: 85).

Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE). Atiśa, abbot at the great Buddhist monastery Vikramaśīla that was located in what is today the state of Bihar, India, had been invited to Tibet by the king of Gugé (*gu ge*) in Western Tibet. On his way he spent a year in Kathmandu, and founded there the Thām Vihāra (given the Sanskrit name Vikramaśīla-mahāvihāra), which can still be visited today.⁶⁸ Atiśa taught the BCA to disciples in Tibet, and it became a work of central importance to the bKa' gdams pa, the Tibetan philosophical school founded by him. He is said to have emphasized the teaching of the BCA in Tibet, and brought with him the already mentioned abridgements of the BCA, the BCASP and the BCAPiṅ, as well as his own *Bodhisattvacaryāsūtrikṛtāvavāda*,⁶⁹ which is not actually a commentary to the BCA, but a general instruction on the conduct of the bodhisattva. The BCA was therefore also probably a text he emphasized during his stay in Kathmandu.

The earliest dated manuscript that has been preserved connected with the BCA is Kol. G. 3830, containing Prajñākaramatī's (10th Century CE) commentary *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* (BCAP), dated to 1078 CE, only 38 years after Atiśa's visit.⁷⁰ The manuscript is reported by Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 49) to be written in a Newari script, so we can expect that it is a copy executed in Kathmandu. The copying of manuscripts was a central religious activity vital for upholding the Buddhist tradition. Several texts do in fact themselves stress the importance and rewards that result from copying them, such as for instance the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*.⁷¹ Lewis (2000: 16) suggests that “after the Muslim conquest of polities across the Gangetic plains, the Newar *Samgha*'s major areas of religious focus turned to perfecting ritual expressions of the doctrine within society and preserving the *dharma* via manuscript copying.” From this time onward we have a relatively large body of manuscripts of the BCA, attesting to the popularity of this text. The earliest dated manuscript of the BCA itself is a specimen copied in 1180 CE (NGMCP C 14/2), the next is dated to 1399 CE (Lon. 2927), and apart from these there are ten other palm-leaf manuscripts, dated and undated, that were probably copied around this same time period.⁷²

⁶⁸ The Thām Vihāra is close to the British embassy in central Kathmandu.

⁶⁹ Tg khi 237a3-238a6 and Jo bo'i chos chung, gi 10a5-11b1.

⁷⁰ The contents of this and other mss. will be dealt with in a later chapter.

⁷¹ See Harrison (2006: 150).

⁷² These are all listed in the appendix.

The Malla-period

During the Malla Dynasty (1200-1768) Newari Buddhism began to develop its own particular characteristics for which it is also known today. Nepal had inherited a type of Hindu-Buddhist culture that was typical for the whole of India before the Muslim conquest. The Kathmandu Valley hosted many small monasteries modelled on the great monastic institutions found in North-India at the time,⁷³ and its Buddhism was most likely predominantly of an exoteric Mahāyāna devotionalism with esoteric Vajrayāna practices reserved for the specialists. King Jayasthitimalla (r. 1382-95) is said to have formalised the arrangement of the Nepalese society into a caste structure that also included the Buddhists, and this seems to have paved the way for the extraordinary development, seen from a traditional Buddhist perspective, that took place here. There was a gradual turn to non-celibacy among the monks living in the monasteries, and these became instead a caste group with hereditary claims to religious status and ownership of the religious institutions. A special ceremony was devised to uphold these rights, and members were first ordained as monks, and then, usually just a few days later, initiated into the Mahāyāna bodhisattva community (*saṃgha*) as householders. Two main castes developed, the Śākya and the Vajrācārya. The latter were seemingly the descendants of Vajrayāna ritual experts, and had a monopoly on the transmission and practice of the esoteric Vajrayāna practices still upheld today.

As in Tibet the BCA probably played an important role in the transference of bodhisattva vows. From the manuscript remains we see that the tradition of copying the BCA was upheld throughout this period, first on palm-leaf, as discussed above, and later, starting in the 17th Century, on paper. Two paper manuscript of the 17th Century have been preserved, NGMCP H 380/8 and Unk. M. The scribe of the former manuscript was Jayamunī Vajrācārya, of who nothing further is so far known. Judging from his name he must have been a member of the Vajrācārya caste. The main stronghold for Newari Buddhism was the town of Lalitpur (Patan), situated in the south of the Kathmandu Valley. During the period 1482-1768 the valley was divided into three city states, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur, and the last became, as it still is today, the centre for Newari Buddhism. The Asha archives of Patan holds several

⁷³ Such as the already mentioned great monasteries at Nālandā and Vikramaśīla.

copies of the BCA and related texts, and we can expect that many of the manuscripts that have made it to other collections in Nepal and abroad were also originally from Patan.⁷⁴

Modern Nepal

After the Gorkha conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1768, and the following unification of the modern state of Nepal, Hinduism became the dominant religion, and Newari Buddhism has since then suffered a gradual decline. This did not however have any immediate effect on the interest for the BCA, and throughout the 19th Century the text was copied frequently, and later also translated into Newari (BCANew). There are 12 manuscripts in the NGMCP catalogue that date from this period, the earliest, NGMCP B 97/7, copied in 1784. The two manuscripts kept in Paris, but originally from Nepal, are probably also from around the 18th-19th Centuries, as well as others that I have not been able to investigate further.⁷⁵ E 2511/1 is reported to have been copied by Ratnānanda Vajrācārya, another member of this Buddhist caste that we so far have no further information on.⁷⁶

Lewis (2000: 18) comments that due to “declining patronage, Hindu state discrimination, and anti-Mahāyāna missionizing by the revivalist Theravādin monks, the Newar Buddhist *saṃgha* has struggled to survive over the last century.” One way of tackling this has been to make Buddhist literature more available, both in Sanskrit and in Newari. The introduction of the printing press into the Newar community in 1909 greatly facilitated this, and since then over a thousand Buddhist publications have been produced. The translation of the BCA into Newari is probably a fairly recent development, as the manuscripts containing it are a relatively new addition in the collections available to me. Only one manuscript is dated, NGMCP E 1789/39, which was copied in 1952 CE. There are also two manuscripts containing the same Newari commentary, the *Bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣā*, written by Ratna Bahādur Vajrācārya (1893-1955).⁷⁷ The manuscript NGMCP E 1374/25-1375/1, produced in 1943 CE, is perhaps a copy originating from the authors own hand. It is probably the older of the two, as it is written on a loose-leaf manuscript format, while E 10/3 is in a modern book format. In the latter the full Sanskrit verses of the BCA have been added into the text for reference. This manuscript

⁷⁴ See the chapter on manuscripts and the appendix for more on these.

⁷⁵ Such as for instance those held in the Asha archives.

⁷⁶ A 121/8 is reported in the colophon to have been copied at the Ratnakṛti Vihāra by a Vajrācārya that I am unable to decipher the name of. I have not been able to locate this *vihāra*.

⁷⁷ The works of Ratna Bahādur Vajrācārya have been dealt with in Yoshizaki (2007). This article is in Japanese, and since I have not knowledge of this language it has been difficult to benefit from its findings.

material bears witness to a growing interest in the BCA in the 20th Century, or at least an interest that is just as lively as in previous centuries.

During my studies at a Tibetan Buddhist monastery near Boudhanath, Kathmandu, from 2002-2006 I met several young men from the Newar Buddhist community who were concerned for the future of their tradition. Some were members of the Vajrācārya caste, and they came to study in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition for inspiration to take back to their own community, and the work they were to take up there. Among the texts taught most often at the monastery was the BCA. Perhaps the Tibetan Buddhist emphasis on this text, and their growing influence in the Kathmandu Valley, will have an influence on the Newar tradition of the BCA. With the growing concern for keeping their tradition alive, and the increased availability of Buddhist literature, it is at least likely that the Newars' transmission of the BCA will not end any time soon. That there is a particular Newar tradition of the BCA is not something that is widely known within scholarly circles, a peculiar fact as the Newars are the only ones who have kept its tradition alive in the original language of Sanskrit. Further research into this tradition is required, and of particular interest is the Newari commentary that has been revealed. Both as a testimony to the last surviving "Indian" Buddhist tradition of the BCA, and as an important work of Newari literature, this would indeed merit a study of its own.⁷⁸

3. Tibet

The BCA has had a massive impact on Tibetan Buddhism. It is one of the most influential Indian Buddhist texts translated into Tibetan, held in awe by all the major sects, and has been the focus of heated philosophical debates, of meditational practices aimed at cultivating a compassionate mind, and chanted in devotional practices. To present anything that could resemble a comprehensive account of its history and impact in Tibet would be impossible within the limited space available to us here. Aspects of its role within Tibetan Buddhism today will also be treated in separate chapters below, such as in the presentation of a teaching on it given by the 14th Dalai Lama. There we will see an example of its practical usage as a

⁷⁸ Recently V. Divyavajra (1986) published what seems to be a Sanskrit edition with Newari translations of the BCA and the BCAP. This has not been available to me so far, but would indeed be of interest in further work on the BCANew.

manual to instruct aspiring bodhisattvas. What follows here will be a general survey of some of the important events of the BCA's career in Tibet. We will see how it was translated and received initially, examples of how it was used as a practical means of training in awakening, and how it arrived in the centre of heated sectarian debates. This will be but a mere overview of some of the research that has been done on the BCA's role in Tibet, and hopefully it will draw some general lines that can open up new avenues for future inquiries.

The translation process

In the canonical edition available to us in the Tg we find the following colophon describing the process of how the BCA was translated:

*|| byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa slob dpon sha nta (sic) de bas mdzad pa rdzogs so || || rgya gar gyi mkhan po sa rba dzny'a de ba dan | zhu chen gyi lo ts'a ba ban de dPal brtsegs kyis kha che'i dpe las zhus te gtan la phab pa las | slad kyis rgya gar gyi mkhan po dha rma shr'i bha dra dang | zhu chen gyi lo ts'a ba ban de rin chen bzang po dang | sh'a kya blo gros kyis yul dbus kyi dpe dan 'grel pa dan mthun par bcos shing bsgyur te gtan la phab pa'o || | yang dus phyis rgya gar gyi mkhan po su ma ti k'i rti dang | zhu chen gyi lo ts'a ba dge slong blo ldan shes rab kyis dag par bcos shing bsgyur te legs par gtan la phab pa'o || ||*⁷⁹

“Introduction to the Practice of a Bodhisattva by the master Śāntideva is concluded. The Indian preceptor Sarvajñādeva and the great editor-translator venerable dPal brtsegs established an edition of this based on a manuscript from Kashmir. Using this [edition] the Indian preceptor Dharmasrībhadrā, the great editor-translator venerable Rin chen bzang po and Śākya blo gros established a translation based on a manuscript, and in accordance with a commentary, from Madhyadeśa (North-central India). Later, the Indian preceptor Sumatikīrti and the great editor-translator monk Blo ldan shes rab performed a detailed editing of this establishing the final translation.”⁸⁰

In a series of groundbreaking articles Akira Saito has illustrated some of the details of what this colophon outlines, and the process leading towards the canonical edition available today.⁸¹ It is mainly from the work of Saito that the following results have been gathered.

⁷⁹ Tg la 40a5-7.

⁸⁰ Saito (1999: 176) suggests that this information must have been drawn from the observations made by Bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364) in the catalogue attached to the Tg. Bu ston is famed for having collected the Tibetan canon in 1334.

⁸¹ Saito (1993, 1997, and 1999).

As the colophon tells us the translation of the BCA went through three stages. The initial work (BCATib₁) was done by sKa ba dPal brtseg (8th-9th Century) and Sarvajñādeva (8th-9th Century). According to Dudjom (1991: 515), a traditional account, Sarvajñādeva was invited to Tibet as one of several Indian Buddhist experts by king Khri Srong lde'u btsan (742-797; r. 755-797), the celebrated king accredited with having firmly established Buddhism in Tibet. Khri Srong lde'u btsan is said to have first invited the abbot of Nālanda Śāntarakṣita (8th Century) and the tantric master Padmasambhava (8th Century), the initiators of the first lineages of respectively the *sūtra* and *tantra* teachings in Tibet, and to have established the first Buddhist monastery, bSam yas, in the year 779. In order to commence the translation of the Buddhist canon several Indian experts were also invited, and in addition to Sarvajñādeva we hear of Jinamitra and Dānaśīla, among others. Tibetans were trained in the science of translation, and in addition to sKa ba dPal brtseg we hear of Ye shes sde, Klu'i rgyal mtshan, and Vairocana. These personas started the enormous and impressive translation process that would lead to the establishment of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Precisely when the first translation of the BCA was established we can not say. It might have taken place under the rule of Khri Srong lde'u btsan, or it might have been during the rule of one of the subsequent kings. Most sources place the translations of sKa ba dPal brtseg around the year 800,⁸² which could imply that it took place under a subsequent king, perhaps Mu ne btsan po (r. c. 797-799?) or Khri lDe srong btsan (r. 804-815). The next king, Ral pa can (r. 815-838), is famed for having formalised the translation process by establishing fixed rules as laid out in for instance the *Mahavyutpatti*, a Sanskrit-Tibetan standardized word-list. The first translation of the BCA perhaps found its final form under this king.

What can be said with certainty is that the BCA was translated during the dynastic period, in the early dissemination of the doctrine (*bstan pa'i snga dar*) as it is traditionally called, since it is included in the *lDan dkar ma*, the earliest known catalogue of translations dating from this time.⁸³ This translation was based on the BCA₁, and contained 701,5/202,5 verses. The only exemplars that have survived of this translation are four mss. that were found in the caves at Dūnhuáng, in the Gansu province, China, in the beginning of the 20th Century.⁸⁴

⁸² See for instance Ruegg (1981: 59 and 99).

⁸³ Saito (1993: 6-7).

⁸⁴ The Dūnhuáng cave-complex was sealed around 1000 CE, and contained a wide variety of mostly Buddhist literature in Tibetan, Sanskrit, and several other languages.

They were brought to London and Paris by the explorers Auriel Stein (1862-1943) and Paul Pelliot (1878-1945), and are today kept at the British Library in London and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.⁸⁵ That these mss. are from the early dissemination is illustrated in part by the orthography, which demonstrates certain features of the language that had disappeared at the time of the later dissemination. These include such archaic attributes as *ya* (*ya btags*) subscribed to the root-letter *ma*,⁸⁶ and use of the later redundant post-suffix *da*,⁸⁷ to name two examples. Another proof of its age, and at least partial accuracy of the above quoted canonical colophon, is the colophon to the ms. Lon. IOL Tib. J 629 (folio 40b4-5) which indeed attributes its translation to *mKhan po Sa ra ba da nya* (sic) *de va* (“the preceptor Sarvajñādeva”) and *Zhu chen gyi lo tsa ba ban’ de dPal brtseg* (“chief editor-translator venerable dPal brtseg”). The canonical colophon also mentions that the Sanskrit ms. employed for BCATib₁ was from Kashmir, and Saito (1999: 176) attributes this observation to the compiler of the Tg, Bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364). The later Tibetan historian Tāranātha (1575-1608), however, says that the ms. was from East India.⁸⁸ Bu ston does not expand on his observation regarding the ms.’s origin, but Tāranātha, as we have seen before does. Tāranātha⁸⁹ is perhaps, for some as yet unknown reason, attempting to restore the Kasmiri masters’ lineage as authentic when he observes that it was not them, but those from East India who transmitted the, to him incorrect, ms. that formed the base for the BCATib₁. They both, however, agree that the later, and correct version of the BCATib came from North-central India.

The revisions

The revision of the BCATib₁ was, according to our colophon, performed by the Indian master Dharmaśrībhadrā (10th-11th Century?) and the Tibetan translators Rin chen bzang po (958-1055), and Śākya blo gros (10th-11th Century?). Concerning the last translator nothing is known for certain.⁹⁰ He is also not usually emphasized in connection with this work.⁹¹ Rin

⁸⁵ See mss. Lon. IOL Tib J 628-630 and Par. Pt. 794 in the appendix; the International Dūnhuáng Project are in the process of making these mss. available on the internet, and two of them can already be accessed at <http://idp.bl.uk>.

⁸⁶ *Myi* for *mi*; *myed* for *med*; *myig* for *mig*.

⁸⁷ *Gyurd* for *gyur*; *lend* for *len*.

⁸⁸ Saito (1993: 7).

⁸⁹ Saito (1993: 10-11).

⁹⁰ He is perhaps the same Śākya blo gros mentioned in the lineage of the Sa skya sect by Smith (2001: 106). The general timeframe for such a connection would fit.

⁹¹ See for instance Saito (1999) who does not mention his involvement at all.

chen bzang po is however well known.⁹² He was connected to the kingdom of Gu ge in Western Tibet, a dynasty with family ties to the ancient royal line. The rulers of Gu ge wished to emulate the kings of old, and their support for Buddhism must at least in part be seen as politically motivated. Tradition tells us that Rin chen bzang po was among 21 youths sent to Kashmir by the Gu ge king Ye shes 'od (c. 956-1036) to be trained as translators and to reintroduce Buddhism to Tibet.⁹³ It seems, however, that he travelled to Kashmir on his own account, and only later became associated with the Gu ge kings. Dharmasrībhadrā was perhaps the master he studied under in Kashmir. Rin chen bzang po was a diverse scholar, involved in the translation of several yogatantras and medical works, as well as the development of the Tibetan traditions of painting and sculpturing.

The only ms. containing an edition of Rin chen bzang po's revision (BCATib₂) has been found at Tabo monastery in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, established by Ye shes 'od about 996. This find, and its relationship with the BCATib₁, has been dealt with in Saito (1999). The Tabo ms. is incomplete. It contains 12 folia, of a probable total of 37, and the last verse preserved is 5.97. It is a translation of BCA₂, but contains verses from BCATib₁. The translator must have had a version of the old translation of sKa ba dPal brtseg available, but had acquired a ms. of the expanded and later Sanskrit edition of the BCA, perhaps a ms. from North-central India (*Madhyadeśa*) as the colophon states. It is not known which commentary Rin chen bzang po consulted, as mentioned in the colophon. Saito found that Rin chen bzang po's translation was not free from careless omission of verses as well as unsuitable renderings of the BCA₂, and that the copyist of the Tabo ms. must have consulted a Sanskrit edition while copying, and have tried to correct some of the mistakes. Only some of these corrections were later included in the third translation discussed below. Note should also be made of the fact that renderings from the Tabo ms. can be found in the translations of the BCAṢP and BCAPiṅ, the earlier mentioned abbreviated version of the BCA brought to Tibet by the Atiśa. Atiśa was invited to Gu ge and met Rin chen bzang po when the latter was already an old man in 1046. Atiśa's influence on the spread of the BCA in Tibet will be discussed below.

⁹² The life of Rin chen bzang po is dealt with in Kapstein (2006: 90-95).

⁹³ After the collapse of the Tibetan kingdom in the mid 9th Century the predicament of Buddhism worsened, and Tibetan historians refer to the period up to c. 1000 as the Dark Period.

The third revision was done by Sumatikīrti (11th Century?) and Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109)⁹⁴ (BCATib₃). Sumatikīrti is referred to as an Indian preceptor (*rgya gar gyi mkhan po*) in our colophon. Cleaves (1954: 24) however reports that the Mongolian translation of the colophon describes him as “Nepali”. Blo ldan shes rab is most famous for being one of the instigators of the “New Logic” (*tshad ma gsar ma*), the scholastic tradition that would later inspire the well known and still prosperous Tibetan tradition of monastic philosophical debate.⁹⁵ When Bu ston rin chen grub (1290-1364) was compiling the Tg at Zha lu monastery in 1334 he noted that it was Blo ldan shes rab’s version of the BCATib that he was including in the collection.⁹⁶ This final edition contained 913 verses, over 200 more than the BCATib₁. The ms. he used was not, however, one copied by Blo ldan shes rab himself, but by the bKa’ gdams pa master gTsang nag pa Brtson ’grus seng ge (12-13th Century), and it appears that this ms. contained several corrections done by him. Bu ston, after himself having consulted a Sanskrit original as well as several commentaries, did not agree with many of these “corrections”. He therefore tried to find a more reliable copy of Blo ldan shes rab’s translation, but in vain. He therefore left the edition as it was, and it is this that has been handed down to us in the Tg.⁹⁷ Fortunately Bu ston also gives us the lineage of transmission of the BCA that he received.⁹⁸ This lineage seems to affirm the suggestion that Sumatikīrti was indeed Nepali, as his teacher, Kanakaśrī, was a Nepali.

Atiśa and the bKa’ gdams pas

The native Tibetan tradition of writing manuals aimed at mental purification (*blo sbyong*) is in large part inspired by the BCA and its promotion by the Indian master Atiśa

⁹⁴ rNgog lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of this tradition see for instance Dreyfus (2003).

⁹⁶ Saito (1997: 81).

⁹⁷ It should however be noted that the Peking (Q) and Narthang (N) editions differ from the Derge (Tg) edition in certain places, as illustrated by Saito (1999). These seem to have been corrected further based on a Sanskrit ms., and have also incorporated certain of Bu ston’s corrections as found in his commentary on the BCA, the *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’i ’grel pa byang chub kyi sems gsal bar byed pa zla ba’i ’od zer*.

⁹⁸ Saito (1997: 80); Śāntideva (7th Century) → Jitāri → Small Candrakīrti → Kunayaśrī → Nepalese Kanakaśrī → Sumatikīrti (11th Century) → rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059-1109) → Khyung Rin chen grags → sTod lung rGya dmar → [Gro lung pa Blo gros ’byung gnas →] Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169) → gTang dkar → [Kha che Paṇ chen Śākyasrībhadra (1127-1225)/Paṇḍita Buddhaśrījñāna and Nepalese Paṇḍita Devaśrī →] Khro phu lo tsā ba Byams pa’i dpal (1172/73-1225) → bSod nams rgyal ba and gZhon nu rdo rje → Tshad ma’i skyes bu → Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364) (Names in square brackets imply that these masters came from other lineages).

Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE).⁹⁹ As we have seen Atiśa arrived in Tibet in 1046, invited by the royal court of Gu ge. His planned return to India three years later was prevented by political turmoil in Nepal, and he instead accepted the invitation by some of his disciples to go to central Tibet. He taught for many years in that area and is considered the forefather of the dKa' gdams pa sect established by his disciple 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1004-1057), the forerunner to the later dGe lugs pa sect established by Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419). The dKa' gdams pas, the literal meaning of the name being “scripture and precepts”, highlighted the texts of the Buddhist canon as the authoritative source, and the practical precepts of the Mahāyāna traditions as the appropriate basis for the religious life, as taught by Atiśa. This movement was in part a reaction to the conceived immorality prevalent in some of the esoteric tantric traditions stemming from the dynastic period, and one that highlighted the dire need for a proper monastic community as the main transmitter of the Buddhist teachings.

The tradition of mental purification is quite clear about the influence of the BCA, and accredits Śāntideva as one of the major figure in its transmission. It was mainly from the 8th chapter of the BCA, the perfection of contemplation (*dhyānapāramitā*), that this teaching drew its inspiration. In here we learn of the practice of exchanging oneself with others:

| gang zhig bdag dang gzhan rnam ni | | myur du bskyab par 'dod pa des |
 | bdag dang gzhan du brje bya ba | | gsang ba 'i dam pa spyad par bya |¹⁰⁰

“Whoever wishes to quickly rescue oneself and others
 should practice the supreme mystery, exchanging oneself with others.”

The verses that follow describe the reasoning behind this practice and the mental attitude one should engender. It is based on the observation that pride and self-centredness leads to suffering, and that it is only through valuing others and wishing for their happiness, and not only one's own, that one's aims will be fulfilled. This practice became immensely popular, not only within the sKa' gdams pa sect, and the commentarial literature it instigated is found within all the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism. As the main source for this practice, the

⁹⁹ For an introduction to the genre of texts on mental purification see Michael J. Sweet's article “Mental Purification (*blo sbyong*): A Native Tibetan Genre of Religious Literature” in Cabezón (1996), pp. 244-260.

¹⁰⁰ Tg la 28a2; verse 8.120.

BCA became regarded as one of the six main treatises of the bKa' gdams pa school.¹⁰¹ We know of commentaries by many of the great bKa' gdams pa teachers, such as the already mentioned translator rNgog lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab, his disciple and famous logician Phywa pa Chos kyi seng ge (11th-12th Cent), Nyang bran Chos kyi ye shes (12th Century), Lha 'Bri sgang pa (12th Century), Gtsang Nag pa Brtson 'grus seng ge who was involved in the transmission of the final translation described above, Bu ston rin chen grub, Mtso sna ba Shes rab bzang po (14th century), dGa' ba gdong Mkhan po Chos dpal bzang po, Grub pa shes rab (14th Century), and rGyal sras Thogs med (1295-1369).¹⁰² The commentary by rGyal sras Thogs med is by far the most influential of these, and was, as we shall see in a later chapter, used as a basis for the first translation into English of the BCATib.¹⁰³

The BCA in a meditation-manual

The BCA also had a strong influence on the practice oriented bKa' brgyud sect. One of this sects main forebears was Gam po pa bSod nams rin chen (1079-1153), who prior to meeting his main teacher, the yogin Mi la ras pa (1052-1135), was a student of the bKa' gdams pa sect. As a scholastically trained monk, in a tradition mostly geared toward tantric meditational practices, he provided the school with a Mahāyāna theoretical basis,¹⁰⁴ at least partially inspired by his previous training. Although he did not himself write a commentary on the BCA, it is likely that some of the focus on the BCA within the bKa' brgyud sect is due to Gam po pa. The by far largest Tibetan commentary on the BCA was written by dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (d. mid 16th Century), a disciple of the 8th Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554).¹⁰⁵ The next head of the Karma bKa' brgyud sect, the 9th Karma pa dBang phyug rdo rje (1556-1603), wrote a practice manual for meditation of the type known as a “preliminary practice” (*sngon 'gro*).¹⁰⁶ This manual leads the meditator through four practices: taking refuge and giving rise to bodhicitta, purification through meditation of the deity Vajrasattva, practicing generosity through *maṇḍala*-offering, and developing devotion to ones teacher

¹⁰¹ The other five treatises are the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* by Maitreya/Asaṅga, the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* by Asaṅga, the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* by Śāntideva, the *Jātakamālā* of Āryaśūra, and the *Udānavarga*.

¹⁰² Smith (2001: 228).

¹⁰³ See Bathcelor (1979).

¹⁰⁴ Such as in his *Jewel Ornament of Liberation (Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan)*; see Konchog Gyaltsen (1998).

¹⁰⁵ The 9th chapter of this commentary is translated in Brunhölzl (2004).

¹⁰⁶ *The Chariot that Carries Us Along the Noble Way ('Phags lam bgrod pa'i shing rta)*; this text and its practice is treated in Hanson (2000).

through *guryoga*. In the section concerned with bodhicitta there are several quotes from the BCA. The meditator is meant to recite these while actively trying to engender the altruistic mind of bodhicitta. The actual vow of bodhicitta is first recited three times, and part of this consists of verses 3.22-23:

ji ltar sngon gyi bde gshegs kyis		*byang chub thugs ni bskyed pa dang*
byang chub sems dpa'i bslab pa la		*de dag rim bzhin gnas pa ltar*
de bshin 'gro la phan don du		*byang chub sems ni bskyed bgyi zhing*
de bzhin du ni bslab pa la'ang		*rim pa bzhin du bslab par bgyi*

“Just as the sugatas of old gave rise to bodhicitta
 and gradually trained in these practices of a bodhisattva,
 just so will I too, for the benefit of beings, give rise to bodhicitta,
 and train in these same practices, gradually traversing these stages.”

This is followed, among other quotes, by verses 3.25, 26, 33, 10.32, and 49, which are used as verses of celebration, where the meditator rejoices in having taken up the bodhisattva's vow. This practice is meant to be recited daily, up to several hours a day by someone in retreat, and is formally finished when the vow has been repeated 100000 times. As part of this manual, and similar manuals that have been produced in abundance throughout the history of Buddhism in Tibet, verses of the BCA have been influential in the daily lives of many Tibetan Buddhists.

Philosophical controversies

The 9th chapter of the BCA, the one concerned with the perfection of transcendental wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), has been at the centre of much heated debate in Tibet. From early times the Buddhist tradition employed critical analysis of the phenomena we experience as a means for working one's way towards the state of awakening. Typically the analysis dealt with phenomena such as one's conceived self (*ātman*), which if related to with attachment is considered the main obstacle for realization. The philosophical branch of Buddhism the BCA is identified with is Mādhyamika,¹⁰⁸ often specified as Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika in Tibet, the highest philosophical school in the hierarchy of Buddhist philosophical views that Tibetan Buddhism operates with.¹⁰⁹ A Mādhyamika type of analysis will typically start with a concept

¹⁰⁷ Tg la 7b2-3.

¹⁰⁸ For a treatment of the philosophy of the Mādhyamika, see Williams (1989).

¹⁰⁹ The four main philosophical schools are, from the lowest to the highest, the Vaibhāṣika (the Enumerators), Sautrāntika (the Followers of Scripture), Yogācāra (the Practitioners), and the Mādhyamika (the Middle Way).

we hold true in everyday life and deconstruct it until it has been thoroughly shown to be exactly that, nothing more than a concept superimposed on our experiences, and not something that accurately describes the world. A particular approach of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika is to deconstruct the philosophical approaches of other schools, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, and this is exactly what the 9th chapter of the BCA does. It takes the ideas of the, according to the Tibetan doxographical system, “lesser” schools, and shows the absurd consequences (*prasaṅga*) that holding such views will lead to.

This approach has a tendency to balance along the precipice of nihilism, and this accusation was often brought upon those Tibetan philosophers who were considered to go too far in their refutation of phenomena. The dGe lugs pa sect often found themselves on one side of such debates, taking the more sombre view of upholding a rigorous logic that should not be allowed to run amok, lest one should end up refuting everything and be left standing in the dark. The graded path (*lam rim*) introduced by Atiśa, leading the way gradually and safely towards awakening, must, according to the dGe lugs pas, be upheld. The instantaneous realization professed by some practitioners rDzogs chen (the great perfection), a practice considered by the rNying ma pa sect to have been introduced to Tibet by Padmasambhava, was even accused of heresy by certain dGe lugs pas. The rDzogs chen yogis were, however, mostly content, as Smith (2001: 229) puts it, “to get about the task of emptying their mind of all conceptualization through the practice of higher esoteric methods.” They were not so interested in formulating specific philosophical theories about how this actually took place. That is, they were, until the celebrated rNying ma pa scholar Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846-1912) came along and stirred up a debate concerning the 9th chapter of the BCA that would last for decades.¹¹⁰

The exact contents of this debate will not be discussed here. As a brief example of the nature of the debate we can quote the BCA verse 9.2, where it says:

| *kun rdzob dañ ni don dam ste* | | *'di ni bden pa gñis su 'dod* |

The Mādhyamika is again divided into the Svatantrika Mādhyamika (the Middle Way Autonomists) and the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika (the Middle Way Consequentialists).

¹¹⁰ Mi pham’s text was entitled *She rab kyi le’u’i tshig don go sla bar rnam par bshad pa nor bu ke ta ka* (*The Ketaka-jewel: a commentary to ease the understanding of the chapter on transcendental wisdom*); for a discussion of this controversy see Smith (2001: 227-233); for a discussion of Mi pham and his philosophy see Pettit (1999a).

| *don dam blo yi spyod yul min* | | *blo ni kun rdzob yin par brjod* |¹¹¹

”The conventional and the ultimate, these are the two truths we profess.

The ultimate is not an object of the intellect; the intellect is within the scope of the conventional.”

The debate that this verse caused is discussed in some detail by Sweet (1977: 20-32 and 1979). The disagreement is caused by the second line of the verse, and whether it should be understood literally or interpreted. The dGe lugs pas generally hold that it should be interpreted, and that when Śāntideva says that “the ultimate is not an object of the intellect”, he is referring to a deluded intellect. Surely, the dGe lugs pa says, it must be possible to approach the ultimate nature of things by means of the intellect, for how else are we to become able to understand and realize awakening if not by means of rigorous logic? Representatives of the three other main schools, the rNying ma, bKa’ brgyud, and Sa skya, were generally in favour of a more literal interpretation, and understood the verse as meaning that all conceptualization must in the end be eliminated in order to reach the realization of the ultimate.

A contemporary example

Due to a fortunate coincidence I have also been introduced to a contemporary example of the BCA’s influence in Tibet. Puchung Tsering, a former graduate of Tibet University, has informed me of the fact that the BCA has experienced somewhat of a revival lately in the scholastic milieu of Lhasa.¹¹² In 1981, after the softening of Chinese politics in Tibet in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, The School for Tibetan Cadre (renamed Tibet University in 1985) was allowed to begin teaching a wider range of subjects, including Tibetan religion. There were however few educated scholars who could teach such a subject in Tibet at the time, and a quite original solution was devised to fill the new vacancies. During the Cultural Revolution all Tibetan Buddhist monks were forced to disrobe and take up a lay life. Many of these, especially from such prominent monastic institutions as dGa’ ldan, ’Bras spung, and bKra shis lhun po near Lhasa, were highly educated scholars, experts in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and history. Several of these were hired as teachers, and they were given relatively free reins when it came to the format and syllabus to be used. This resulted, quite as one could expect, in a religious studies program that was basically a duplicate of the program

¹¹¹ Tg la 31a1.

¹¹² This information is based on an interview with Puchung Tsering, presently working as a doctoral candidate at the University of Oslo, Norway, conducted at the University of Oslo on the 5th of March, 2009.

followed at the dGe lugs monastic institutions prior to the Cultural Revolution, with great emphasis laid on the art of debate, and, most interesting for our present study, a separate course devoted specifically to an in depth study of the BCA. When Puchung attended the class during the period 1989-1991 the class was taught for four hours a week, and the teacher was a former teacher from bKra shis lhun po, Geshe Tsewang (*dge shes tshe dbang*; d. 2007). The text was taught in great detail, using the commentaries by for instance Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419) and rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364-1432), and during the two years Puchung attended the class they were only able to cover the text up to the fifth chapter. It was expected of the students to memorize the text, and Puchung is still able today to recite most of the text up to this chapter. In 1997 there was an educational reform that resulted in restrictions on teaching religious subjects related to Tibetan Buddhism. There was no longer a separate class taught on the BCA from this time onwards, but the text was still taught under the headlines of more general subjects on the MA level. Puchung could also inform me that the 10th chapter of the BCA is found in prayer booklets found in many homes in Lhasa. It is therefore chanted regularly by many among the general populace, and is an important part of the daily life of the, again, flourishing Tibetan Buddhist religion.

4. China

In the Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon we find an apparently incomplete translation of the BCA by the name *Pútíxíng Jīng* 菩提行經 (BCAChi).¹¹³ This translation is reported to have been executed by Tiān Xīzāi 天息災 in 985 CE, during the Northern Sòng dynasty.¹¹⁴ Although it was included in the official canon this translation does not seem to have gained much importance in Chinese and, as a consequence, East Asian Buddhism in general. In order to shed some light on this lack of interest, and before dealing with the details of the translation itself, it will first be helpful to make a small investigation of the context in which the translation took place.

¹¹³ *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, Tokyo, 1926-34, Vol. 32, Text No. 1662; this translation was first noticed by Lévi (1902) and La Vallée Poussin (1903).

¹¹⁴ Lancaster (1979): http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k1121.html; extracted from the internet 28th November 2008.

By scholars working on the topic the state of Chinese Buddhism during the Sòng 宋 dynasty (960-1279 CE) has been described by such diametrically opposed characteristics as “decline” and “golden age”.¹¹⁵ The decline has been linked to a culture of internal corruption and doctrinal stagnation that characterized the Buddhism patronized by the state, and the fact that the gap between this and the religion of the masses widened. On the other hand many factors indicate that Buddhism was in fact flourishing during the period. Many Indian monks travelled to China, even more Chinese pilgrims paid India a visit, and the number of translations that were undertaken was comparable to the glory-days of Buddhism during earlier dynasties. Moreover, the characteristic schools of Chinese Buddhism, such as Chán 禪, Tiāntāi 天台 and others, had developed a strong identity and were having great success, and so it seems that Buddhism in China was anything but on the decline. Still, the latter period of the Sòng dynasty marks the end of the flourishing Buddhist exchange with India, and throughout the period newly translated Buddhist texts had little influence on the general development of Chinese Buddhism. This seems also to have been the case with the BCA. Different reasons have been put forth to explain this phenomenon. Tansen Sen (2002) argues that the most important reason must have been that the, by this time, fully developed indigenous schools of Chinese Buddhism saw little need for newly translated doctrines. While there was in fact a bustling translation activity taking place, this was executed under state patronage, and there are indications that it was upheld by the rulers mainly for political purposes, and was far removed from the Buddhism of the populace.

Translations during the Sòng dynasty

After a hiatus of 160 years since the Táng 唐 dynasty (618-907 CE) began to gradually disintegrate, the translation activities in China were revived during the reign of the Sòng emperor Tàizǔ 太祖 (r. 960-976).¹¹⁶ In the year 966 permission and provisions were given to a group of over 150 pilgrims to travel to the Western Regions to search for Buddhist teachings, and in 973 the first two translations of this period were presented to the court.¹¹⁷ The court’s decision to endorse Buddhism was likely in part political as it would legitimize the authority of the Sòng emperor in the eyes of the many neighbouring Buddhist states. The monks’ literacy and learning was also a highly regarded commodity at the court, and so were many

¹¹⁵ Sen (2002: 27-8); in this section I mainly base myself on the findings of Jan (1966) and Sen (2002).

¹¹⁶ Sen (2002: 31).

¹¹⁷ These were the Shèng wúliàngshòu jīng 聖無量壽經 (T. 937) and Qīfó zàn 七佛讚 (T. 1682) translated by the Maghadhan monk Fātiān 法天 (Dharmadeva?, d. 1001) and the Chinese monk Fājìn 法進.

texts that were considered as powerful tools if employed for political ends. It was therefore not necessarily due to a popular need for more teachings from India that the translation activity was revived. Newly translated texts were presented to the court on auspicious occasions, and their production seems to have eventually become a sort of formality, as certain occasions required their presentation. The texts seem not to necessarily have been meant for the Buddhist clergy in China at all. The lively commentarial tradition of earlier times is conspicuously absent during the Sòng dynasty. The Chinese had fully developed their own strand of Buddhism and new ideas from India were not in demand. In fact they seem to have been outright unwanted, and there was a tendency towards disassociating Chinese Buddhism completely from its Indian origins in order to legitimize it as an authentic Chinese tradition that could meet Chinese needs. A state-monk by the name Zànnìng 贊寧 was particularly outspoken in this regard when he criticised Indian culture for being unsophisticated and simple, since they did not even have a clear date for the birth of the Buddha. He also reiterated earlier Chinese claims of Buddhism having been present in China during the Zhōu 周 dynasty (1045-256 BCE), centuries before it was actually introduced.¹¹⁸

In 980 the second emperor of the Sòng dynasty, Tàizōng 太宗 (r. 977-997), established the Institute for the Translation of Sūtras [Yìjīng yuàn 譯經院; renamed Institute for the Transmission of the Dharma (Chuánfǎ yuàn 傳法院) in 983]. The institute was housed in the capital Biànjīng 汴京, in the western section of the Tàipíngxìngguó Monastery 太平興國寺, and the three leading Indian monks present in China were ordered to reside and work at the institute. These were Fǎtiān 法天 (Dharmadeva?, d. 1001) from Nālandā Monastery in Magadha, Shīhù 施護 (Dānapāla?, d. 1000) from Uḍḍiyāna, and Tiān Xīzāi 天息災 (Devaśāntika?, d. 1000; later given the name Fǎxián 法賢¹¹⁹ by the Chinese emperor), the translator of the BCA, from Kashmir. These were the chief translators, and although it is their name alone that is given as the translators of the works they were involved with, they did not work alone. A detailed description of the translation projects that took place under Tiān Xīzāi is translated in Sen (2002: 35-36): After a week of ritual preparations the chief translator is seated with his co-workers around a wooden altar. He begins by reading out loud and explaining the text while conferring with his philological assistant sitting to his left. The text

¹¹⁸ Sen (2002: 71)

¹¹⁹ On the mistaken identification of Fǎxián with Fǎtiān, see Jan (1966: 34-35).

appraiser sitting to his right listens while checking for errors, while a fourth transcribes the Sanskrit sounds into Chinese characters. A translator-scribe then translates each Sanskrit word into Chinese in the order given in the original text. This makes for awkward Chinese, so a sixth person, the text composer, links up the characters turning them into a meaningful text. A proof reader next compares the translation with the original, and an editor deletes unnecessarily long expressions and checks the meaning of phrases. Finally there is the stylist who, apart from administering the monks involved, also takes part in giving style to the translation. There was also added a printing press to the institute, so many more, including both monks and laymen, were involved in the production of the final editions. This painstakingly scientific procedure was not unique to the Sòng dynasty, but what was unique was the complete centralization of the whole process. During previous periods several major monasteries housed translation committees, some independent and some sponsored by the state. Moreover, the members of the Chinese Buddhist community were themselves the ones responsible for determining what the Buddhist canon should consist of. The Sòng court on the other hand took full control over the whole process, something which to some extent at least must have alienated the Buddhist community. One recorded incident that illustrates the opposition felt among the Buddhist clergy to the revival of translation activities is translated in Jan (1966: 136). When the institute was to present the first completed translations it was decided that 100 monk-scholars, experts of sects flourishing at the court, should assemble to examine these. They are said to have declared that “the Institute for Translation had been abolished for a long time, and the translating work is a very difficult task,” and to have interrogated Tiān Xīzāi thoroughly, who in response gave quotations from scriptures until the questioners were finally “convinced.” They can not, however, have been very convinced, as is illustrated by the lack of influence of the Sòng translations.

Tiān Xīzāi

The translator of the BCA was, as has been mentioned, Tiān Xīzāi, no doubt working together with a group of both Indian and Chinese monks in the manner illustrated above. Being a native of Kashmir he is reported to have entered the Milín Monastery 密林 (Tamasāvana Saṅgārama?) in Jālandhara¹²⁰ at the age of twelve to study *śabdavidyā* 声明學 (grammar and philology). Together with his paternal cousin Shīhù from Uḍḍiyāna, another of the chief

¹²⁰ Jan (1966: 37) suggests that, although there was a monastery named Tamasāvana Saṅgārama near Jālandhara, it might be that the name Milín might refer to another monastery that was within the borders of Kaśmīr at the time.

translators at the Sòng court, he set out towards China with the intention of translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. They were detained for some months by the ruler of Dūnhuáng, but managed to escape with all but a few Buddhist manuscripts confiscated, and finally arrived in the Sòng capital in 980. Tiān Xīzāi worked at the Institute for the Transmission of the Dharma until his death on the 4th of September 1000, and 94 translations in 170 scrolls are attributed to him.¹²¹ He was apparently concerned for the future of translation activities in China, mainly because of a declining number of qualified Indian monks arriving there, and in 983 he is said to have requested the court to provide for 50 novices to learn Sanskrit at the institute. After his death he was awarded the title *huìbiàn* 慧辯 (wise and eloquent) by the emperor, and was no doubt a highly regarded asset at the court.

Linguistic and stylistic aspects are among several other reasons suggested for the failure of influence suffered by the texts translated during the Sòng era.¹²² Hajime Nakamura suggests that this is exactly why the BCA, specifically, was largely overlooked. The BCA, he says, “was read very seldom and has left little influence in later Chinese and Japanese Buddhism because of the awkwardness of the style.”¹²³ The BCAChi seems, with this author’s limited knowledge of Chinese,¹²⁴ to be a difficult text to read, and there are no known Chinese commentaries on it. However, considering the evidence put forth above, it seems likely that the main reason for its negligence is probably that suffered by most translations during this period: a general lack of interest among the Chinese Buddhist clergy towards new ideas. Two traditions that became very influential in north-Indian Buddhism from the second half of the first millennium onwards were the scholastic traditions of Pramāṇa (logic) and Mādhyamika (middle way). These traditions seem to have had little influence in China, especially when compared to Tibet where they came to be regarded somewhat as the quintessence of Buddhism itself. The BCA is considered a work of Mādhyamika, and in the 9th chapter on *prajñāpāramīta* (perfection of wisdom) it employs a rigid method of *reductio ad absurdum* to

¹²¹ A large number when compared to the total of 564 scrolls of translation produced during the 10th and 11th Centuries.

¹²² Other suggested reasons include the deterioration of Buddhism in India, the rise of Tantric Buddhism, Tibet’s emerging role as a leading Buddhist country in the region and its non-centralized rule, and the rise of neo-Confucianism at the Sòng court; see Jan (1966) and Sen (2002) for discussions of these.

¹²³ Hajime Nakamura (1989, reprint), *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes*, Delhi, p. 288; quoted in Sen (2002: 29).

¹²⁴ The BCA was read multilingually at a seminar held by Prof. Jens Braarvig at the University of Oslo in the Spring of 2007. During this seminar I was able to discuss in debt the Chinese translation of the first chapter of the BCA with Prof. Braarvig and stip. Christoph Anderl, the general conclusion being that the translation was indeed a difficult and puzzling one.

disprove the claims of other schools, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Maybe because such ideas did not cater to the Chinese Buddhist mind, or maybe just because it was a too late arrival, the fact of the matter is that the BCAC_{hi} remained an obscure text probably only included in the canon because the emperor wanted it that way.

The Chinese BCA

The Chinese BCA that has been examined for this thesis is the one found in the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (T), published in Tokyo between 1924 and 1934. This was based on older Japanese versions, which again were based on the Korean canon (the oldest extant canon), carved between 1236 and 1251 (the BCA was carved in 1245), as well as individual versions of texts available in Japan. In T the BCA can be found in the *śāstra* 論集部 section, Vol. 32, text No. 1662. The BCA is divided into 4 scrolls (volumes) of roughly equal size, the shortest (scroll 1) containing 3328 characters (only verses counted) and the longest (scroll 4) containing 4544 characters. The verses contain either 20 characters (the classic four groups of five), corresponding to the Sanskrit *anuṣṭubh*-metre containing 8 syllables per *pāda*, or 28 characters (four groups of 7), corresponding to either the *samacatuṣpadī*- (even) or *ardhasamacatuṣpadī*-metre (semi-even) containing 11(12) syllables per *pāda*. Chapter 8 (chapter 10 of the Sanskrit) is an exception, as some of the verses of the Sanskrit are considerably longer. The longest, a *samacatuṣpadī*-metre of the *sragdharā* type with 21 (7+7+7) syllables per *pāda*, is represented by a Chinese verse in 50 (ten groups of five) characters.¹²⁵

What is most noteworthy about the translation at first sight is that a large portion seems to be missing. If compared to the BCA₂, the BCATib₃, and the BCAMon, all verses beginning with verse 14 of the second chapter until the final verse of chapter 4 are left out, a total of 134 verses. The rest of the translation, except for a few scattered verses that are missing here and there, corresponds well with the number and order of verses found in the other languages. The BCAC_{hi} then has 767 verses, while the Sanskrit has 912/913. The chapter-numbers have been altered correspondingly, so that, as chapters 3 and 4 are completely left out, there are eight chapters (and not ten as in BCA₂), numbering from 1 to 8. The scrolls are also arranged so that roughly the same amount of text fits into each, although the first scroll, where we would

¹²⁵ These verse formats were described in the introduction, and the last mentioned verse was also quoted there.

expect to find the missing part, is a bit shorter than the others. If, however, the missing part were to be fitted into scroll 1, this would make it disproportionately large, containing nearly 300 verses, while the other three all contain around 200. This leads us to the likely conclusion that the missing portion was already missing at the time of the carving of the woodblocks in 1245. The missing portion must therefore have been lost at some point between the time of standardisation and carving, and the year of its translation, in 985. Or, alternatively, it was never part of the translation executed by Tiān Xīzāi and his co-workers.

There does not seem to be any reason for why it would have been left out on purpose by the translation team. The content is not markedly different from the rest of the text, which makes the possibility of censorship unlikely. We have already come across, in the Tibetan tradition, a shorter version (BCATib₁), shorter than the Tibetan canonical one. This version does not, however, in any way correspond to the BCACHi, which is clearly, judging from the contents of the later chapters, clearly a translation of BCA₂. Another possibility is that the original manuscript the team had to work with might have been incomplete. Although this could have been the case it does seem strange that a group of highly trained Indian monks were not able to recognize it and seek out a complete manuscript, as the BCA was probably quite an influential text in India at the time. It is also puzzling that the missing portion seems to have been surgically removed, exactly two whole chapters and 53 verses with no loose ends of verses sticking out anywhere. If by accident some pages of the manuscript had fallen out it would be quite a coincidence if these corresponded exactly with the beginning of one verse and the end of chapter 4, as Sanskrit manuscripts of the time were inscribed with continuous text. This could be more probable with a Chinese manuscript where, like in T, each verse occupies exactly two lines. Before any firmer evidence can be put forth it therefore seems most probable that our missing portion was lost from the Chinese translation sometime between 985 and 1245. If, in addition, the text was read as little as has been indicated above there were probably not many manuscripts in circulation, and an accidental loss of text correspondingly difficult to amend.

To conclude this section on the BCACHi we present a small extract to demonstrate the manner the BCA has been translated into Chinese. The verses are taken from the 10th and concluding chapter, *pariṇāmanā* 迴向 (Dedication), and illustrate well the altruistic bodhisattva ideal characteristic of the text as a whole:

ākāśasya sthitir yāvad yāvac ca jagataḥ sthiṭiḥ |
tāvan mama sthitir bhūyāj jagadduḥkhāni nighnataḥ ||
yat kiṃcij jagato duḥkhaṃ tat sarvaṃ mayi pacyatām |
*bodhisattvaśubhaiḥ sarvair jagat sukhitam astu ca ||*¹²⁶

彼或住虛空 或住於世間
今我住亦然 得壞世間苦
世間若有苦 彼一切我得
世間一切善 菩薩之樂得¹²⁷

“For as long as space exists and as long as beings remain,
my existence is devoted to the removal of the world’s suffering.
Whatever be the suffering of beings may it all ripen in me!
And may the world delight in all the goodness of bodhisattvas!”

The verses are translated quite literally, and the word order has only been changed when the Chinese grammar requires it. We can only imagine the above described translation process where each Sanskrit word is first given a Chinese equivalent, and then the verse as a whole is edited for grammatical and stylistic consistency. The commonly used term 菩薩, for instance, is a (somewhat shortened) transcription of *bodhisattva*, which had no equivalent in Chinese, and was therefore left un-translated. All other words in the verses have been given a Chinese equivalent. In the first verse we see the relative co-relative construction *yāvat... tāvat...* reproduced with 彼或... 亦然.... Moreover, we see in the second line an example of the word order having been changed so as to fit the Chinese standard subject-verb-object construction, when *jagadduḥkhāni nighnataḥ*, “the world’s sufferings removed”, is translated into 得壞世間苦, “removing the world’s suffering”. A translation of the Chinese translation could be the following: “As long as there remains space, and [someone] remaining in the world, I then will also remain to remove the world’s suffering. What the world may have of suffering, all of that I will take [upon myself]. May the world get pleasure from all the goodness of the bodhisattvas.”

¹²⁶ Verse 10.55-56; Minayev (1889: 225).

¹²⁷ T 1662 562a7-11.

5. Mongolia

Unlike in Chinese Buddhism, where it was a marginal text, the BCA became very important in Mongolia. Cleaves (1954: 27) ranks it as “without question, one of our most important early Mongolian texts [...], one of the monuments of early Mongolian literature.” It was translated in 1305 CE by the Tibetan monk Čosgi Odser (Mon. Nom-un gerel; Tib. Chos kyi ’od zer; fl. 1305-1321) who worked at the Yuán court.¹²⁸ This translator also wrote a Mongolian commentary to the BCA, but only a fragment of this has been preserved. Together, the translation of the BCA and this commentary is the only early specimen we have of such a combination of native composition and translated literature. The reason why the BCA was so much more influential here is clearly the massive influence of Tibetan Buddhism. The religious and political ties between Mongolia and Tibet became firmly established in the 13th Century, and have been strong ever since, except for the period of strong Soviet communist influence from the 1920s to the early 1990s. Today a revival of Mongolian Buddhism is again taking place, with frequent visits by such prominent Buddhist figures as the 14th Dalai Lama.

The first scholarly reproduction of Čosgi Odser’s translation was published by B.A. Vlarimircov in 1929, in since then the text has raised much interest among Altaic scholars. The same can not be said about the wider field of Buddhist studies in general, and works on the BCA in particular, where the Mongolian translation of the BCA (BCAMon) has barely been mentioned at all. Those working on the BCA have usually been Indologists or Buddhologists specializing in Sanskrit, Tibetan, or both, and have concentrated their efforts on the influence the text has had in India and Tibet. A working knowledge of Mongolian is not something necessarily emphasised in Buddhist Studies, and very few have been able to benefit from the BCAMon, or maybe they have just not been aware of its existence. Apart from some minor contributions by Kanaoka (1966), no work that I am aware of has made any attempts at a detailed comparison of this translation with that of the original, or of the Tibetan.¹²⁹ Scholars of Altaic studies have concentrated their efforts on the Mongolian text

¹²⁸ Although sources tell us that Čosgi Odser was a Tibetan by origin we have, since he worked in a Mongolian setting, chosen to spell his Tibetan name according to the Mongolian spelling.

¹²⁹ Some of the work that has been done is in Russian, German, and Japanese, languages that are not readily available to me, and there might therefore be examples that can prove me wrong.

itself and what it can tell us about Mongolian literature.¹³⁰ The author of the present work does not have any knowledge of Mongolian, and can therefore not claim the ability to add anything substantial to this unfortunate insufficiency. Still, it is possible that the inclusion of this discussion here can alleviate the matter slightly, and pave the way for an inclusion of also the BCAMon in future investigations of the history of the BCA.

The introduction of Buddhism

There was probably some Buddhist influence in Mongolia prior to the massive influence Tibetan Buddhism had in the 13th Century, but no proof can so far be cited in support of this. Buddhism had already been active in China for well over a millennia, and to the South of Mongolia the Silk Road had for centuries acted as a highway for the exchange of culture, especially Buddhism. Qubilai Qaan,¹³¹ who later would be instrumental in the spreading of a Tibetan-inspired Buddhism, was converted to Buddhism already in 1242 by the Chinese monk Hǎiyún (海雲; 1202-1257). The first formal ties between Mongolia and Tibet were established in 1246, when when Gödan Qaan, the grandson of Chingis Qaan (c. 1167-1227), summoned the Tibetan monk Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) to court. Sakya Pandita in effect surrendered Tibet to Mongol overlordship, and was in turn appointed as vice-regent of Tibet by Gödan. The presence of the Buddhist master also served to pique Gödan's religious interests, and in 1249 he was initiated into the religion and became a protector of Buddhism. Later Möngke Qaan (r. 1251-1259), the nephew of Gödan, decreed Buddhism the state religion in 1256 after a series of debates organized between Christians, Muslims, Taoists, and Buddhists. The next emperor Qubilai Qaan (r. 1260-1294), founder of the Yuán Dynasty (1271-1368), kept Sa skya Paṇḍita's nephew 'Phags pa blo gros rdo rje (1235-1280) as a religious leader in his imperial court, and under 'Phags pa's influence Buddhism was firmly established as the state religion, but not yet as the religion of choice among the masses. The political capital was moved by Chingis from Qaraqorum to Beijing, and this is one of the reasons cited by Jerryson (2007:17) for the eventual decline of Mongolian Buddhism towards the end of the 14th Century. Due to this, trade in Outer Mongolia was reduced, something that also reduced the financial support for the Buddhist

¹³⁰ It seems to me that most of those scholars of Altaic studies that have concerned themselves with the BCAMon have not had any knowledge of Sanskrit or Tibetan. Rachewiltz (1996), for instance, mentions in his introduction that he has received help from a colleague on matters related to the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions.

¹³¹ I am generally following the transcription scheme for Mongolian followed by Jerryson (2007). There is a variety of transcription schemes available for Mongolian, and this creates difficulties when referring to other works.

institutions. Another reason was that most of the early Buddhist converts were the wealthy and politically influential. With more difficult economic conditions and the fall of the empire Buddhism was no longer as interesting as before, and indigenous Shamanism regained its hold on parts of the region.

Čosgi Odser

It is in the middle of the Yuán period that we meet Čosgi Odser working at the court of the Mongol emperors. There is no comprehensive bibliography of his life in a language available to me, so for the following observations I base myself mainly on the work of Cleaves (1954 and 1988).¹³² Cleaves cites several Chinese, Mongolian, and Tibetan sources that mention Čosgi Odser, and draws a few conclusions based on this. Judging from the dates of the sources available¹³³ it seems clear that the translator/author flourished between the years 1305 and 1321. This would imply that he at least served under four Yuán emperors, Öljeyitü Qaan (r. 1294-1307), Külüg Qaan (r. 1307-1311), Buyantu Qaan (r. 1311-1320), and Gegegen Qaan (1320-1323). Čosgi Odser was a Sa skya monk, and had probably been sent from Tibet to serve under the Yuán emperors after his predecessor, perhaps 'Phags pa, passed away. At the same time another great Tibetan master, Bu ston rin chen 'grub (1290-1364), was active with compiling the Buddhist canon in Tibet. It is perhaps then not a coincidence that it was during the time of Čosgi Odser that this process would also get under way in Mongolia, for as Waddell (1895: 158) remarked, the “Kāh-gyur was translated into Mongolian about 1310 by the Sasya Lāma Ch'os-Kyi 'Od-zer under the Sasyā Paṇḍita, who, assisted by a staff of twenty-nine learned Tibetan, Ugrian, Chinese and Sanskrit scholars, had previously revised the Tibetan canon by collating it with Chinese and Sanskrit texts, under the patronage of the emperor Kublai Khan.” The passing away of Sa skya Paṇḍita must have taken place some time before the arrival of Čosgi Odser, so the accuracy of this account is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that Čosgi Odser was involved in translations from Tibetan to Mongolian of material (the BCA) that is included in the Tibetan canon.

¹³² Rachewiltz (1996) reports of the existence of a work in Mongolian by D. Cerensodnom entitled *XIV zuuny üeiin yaruu naĩragč Čoži-Odser (The XVI Century Poet Čoži-Odser)* (Šinžlex Uxaany Akademiin Xevlel, Ulan-Bator, 1969). Cleaves (1988: 154) refers to this as “a splendid account of Čhos kyi 'Od zer and his poetry”, while at the same time saying that his present article wishes to “focus attention of its (the new Chinese source he has located) relevance as a source for a biography of Čhos kyi 'Od zer”, which could imply that Cerensodnom's account has not filled that purpose.

¹³³ These are dated 1305, 1310, 1312, 1313, and 1321; see Cleaves (1954: 13-27).

The colophon to Čosgi Odser’s translation of the BCA contains three parts. The first is a Mongolian translation of the colophon also found in the Tibetan translation in Tg, which explains the process by which the text was rendered into Tibetan from Sanskrit.¹³⁴ The second is the colophon written by the translator himself, and the third is a colophon by the redactor, Bilig-ün Dalai, of the 1748 edition included in the printed Mongolian canon. The redaction will be discussed below. Čosgi Odser’s colophon states the following:

“Because such an editing did not exist formerly [in the form of a translation] from the Tibetan language into the Mongolian language, arranging [the text] ever so little, I, Čosgi Odser *ayay-γ-a tegimlig* (sic),¹³⁵ for the sake of being a help unto others by the sounds of the Mongolian people, by reason of the fact that, hearing again and again [the explanations of the masters], have comprehended and understood in a signal manner [the text] ever so little, relying upon my having acquired the cognition whereby I might, without fear, answer him who, disputing with [me] interrogated [me], finished drafting [it] in the snake year.”¹³⁶

As shown by Cleaves (1954: 22-23) the snake year in question is most likely 1305 CE. This is then the earliest dated account of Čosgi Odser’s work at the Yuán court. Several sources place him in a position of central importance when it comes to the translation of Buddhist scriptures in Mongolia. Qubilai Qaan is known to have encouraged the use of the newly acquired Uighur script for Mongolian works,¹³⁷ and ’Phags pa also devised a new script in order to better render Mongolian pronunciation, as well as to make it easier to transcribe Tibetan and Sanskrit words.¹³⁸ The earliest editions of Čosgi Odser’s text were perhaps written in the ’Phags pa script, but there are no editions preserved from this time. The earliest we have is a ms. from Olon Sūme discovered by a Japanese expedition and published in 1940.¹³⁹ This fragment published by Poppe (1954) seems to be from the mid 14th Century, and is written in the Uighur inspired Mongolian script. This fragment unfortunately only contains verses 9.56-60. There are two later complete mss. that seem to predate the the revised 1748 canonical edition. One is the ms. discovered by the Polish orientalist J.S. Kowalewski (1801-1878), now

¹³⁴ See the above section on Tibet for more on this.

¹³⁵ Cleaves (1954: 101): *ayay-qa tegimlig* is the correct spelling, meaning “attaining to the bowl”, i.e. “monk”.

¹³⁶ Cleaves (1954: 24).

¹³⁷ This script, ultimately of Semitic origins, was adapted from that used by the Sogdians to write Buddhist, Manichaean, and Christian works.

¹³⁸ The ’Phags pa script was based on the Tibetan script, but was written downwards, from left to right. It was cumbersome to write, and went out of use after the Yuán Dynasty.

¹³⁹ Hattori Shiro (1940), “Oron Sume shutsudo no Mōkogo bunsho nit suite” (“The Mongolian documents found at Olon Sume, Inner Mongolia”), in *Tōhō Gakuhō (Journal of Oriental Studies)*, Tokyo, no. 11, part 2, pp. 257-278.

kept at the Kazan Theological Academy, Tatarstan, Russia. This formed the basis for the edition published by Vlarimircov (1929). The second is kept in New Delhi, and was published by Lokesh Chandra in 1976.¹⁴⁰

Čosgi Odser seems to have been quite an influential figure. According to the Chinese accounts he was involved in imperial decorations of monasteries, pleaded to the emperor in one case for a monk not be punished too severely, was involved in how monks should be taxed, and at one instance was rewarded 10000 *dīng* 錠 of paper money.¹⁴¹ He was also not only a translator. The commentary *Bodhistw-a Čari-a Awatar-un Tayilbur* (BCATay; *Commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatāra*) was written by Čosgi Odser in 1311, and published in 1312. Unfortunately only 12 folia containing the the commentary to the last 30 verses of chapter 10 have been preserved. This was discovered in the Turfan basin by Albert von Le Coq (1860-1930), and is kept in the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin. Cleaves (1954) edited and translated this material, relating it with the same verses of the Sanskrit BCA translated by Finot (1920). In the colophon Čosgi Odser refers to himself as “well versed in the books of the *agam* (*āgama*; “canonical texts”) and the *yugti* (*yukti*; “collections”)”.¹⁴² He says he composed the commentary on imperial edict. Perhaps the request came from Külüg Qaan, or maybe Buyantu Qaan who took over as emperor that same year. The BCA is referred to by Čosgi Odser as what “manifests the profound and vast views and conduct of the *nom* (*dharma*; “law/teaching”) of the *Yeke Kölgen* (*mahāyāna*; “Great Vehicle”).” The BCA was clearly considered a key text of the newly introduced Buddhism. A text that laid out the rule of conduct for the new faith, and that required an indigenous commentary for this rule to be implemented in the Mongol society.

Later editions and translations

The Oirat scholar Zaya Pandita (1599-1662) according to his biography made a new translation of the BCA.¹⁴³ Zaya Pandita was influential in spreading the Buddhist faith also among the Kalmyks, a Mongolian people who migrated to the shore of the Caspian Sea in the 17th Century. He is said to have translated a large number of texts into the Oirat/Kalmyk

¹⁴⁰ Lokesh Chandra (1976), *Bodhicaryāvatāra. 1. Pre-canonical Mongolian Text. 2. Tibetan Commentary by Blo-bzan-dpal-ldan*, Śata-piṭaka Series 230, New Delhi.

¹⁴¹ Cleaves (1954).

¹⁴² Cleaves (1954: 85).

¹⁴³ Cleaves (1954: 5).

language, so it is quite likely that the BCA was among these. The translation of Zaya Pandita has however not been found.¹⁴⁴ After a period of harsh repression under Soviet rule Buddhism is today again thriving in Kalmykia, being strongly influenced by the exiled Tibetan Buddhist community in India. As it is a central text in Tibetan Buddhism, it is likely that the BCA is having a renewed influence among the Kalmyks.

The most significant development took place in the beginning of the 18th Century. The Manchu empire conquered Mongolia in 1691, and to retain power they understood that they had to keep good relations with the Buddhist faith of the country.¹⁴⁵ Under the Qīng Dynasty (1644-1911) Mongolian Buddhism was allowed to proliferate, and the Mongolian canon was printed in Beijing. Among the works printed was the BCAMon. It was redacted by the Oirat Gūüsi Bilig-un Dalai who flourished in the first half of the 18th Century. The changes affected mainly “the orthography and some, by then, obsolete grammatical and lexical elements.”¹⁴⁶ In spite of the changes the work is, as Rachewiltz (1996: xi) says, still basically Čosgi Odser’s work. It is based on this, together with the work already done by Vlarimircov (1929) and Ligeti,¹⁴⁷ that Rachewiltz published his revised edition of the BCAMon in 1996. According to the colophon¹⁴⁸ Bilig-un Dalai performed his revision at the Sōngzhù Temple 嵩祝寺 in Beijing, guided by lCang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje (1717-1786), the chief administrative religious leader of Tibetan Buddhism in China.¹⁴⁹ The work was begun in 1741, and the canon was finally printed in 1748. The revision was based on three Mongolian and three Tibetan editions of the text, as well as three Tibetan commentaries.

Another translation was also done in the 19th Century by the Buriat written and translator Radna Nomtoev (1821-1907).¹⁵⁰ This translation can be found at the end of the Kowalewski ms., and contains only the 10th chapter. It is a curious translation, and it seems that it was done without basing himself on Čosgi Odser’s translation as it has very little in common with this.

¹⁴⁴ Cleaves (1954: 9); Vladimircov reports that “in spite of intense searches both among the Volga Kalmuks as well as among the Oirat of North-West Mongolia, there has been no success in discovering this translation.”

¹⁴⁵ The Manchus were a Tungusic people, in fact related historically and linguistically with the Mongols, but had taken on Hān customs and traditions in order to rule China.

¹⁴⁶ Rachewiltz (1996: xi).

¹⁴⁷ L. Ligeti (1966), *Šāntideva. A megvilágosodás útja. Bodhicaryāvātāra, Čhos-kyi ’od-zer fordítása*, Mongol Nyelvelméltár VII, Budapest.

¹⁴⁸ Cleaves (1954: 24).

¹⁴⁹ For the life and works of lCang skya Hu thog thu, Ye shes bstan pa’i gron me, alias Rol pa’i rdo rje, see Smith (2001: 133-146); Rol pa’i rdo rje was influential in the translation and revision of the Mongolian canon, compiling a Tibetan-Mongolian bilingual glossary, and working on the translations and revisions under imperial patronage from 1741-42 with what must have been an enormous group of scholars.

¹⁵⁰ Also known as Sumatiratna Blo-bzan-rin-chen.

Radna Nomtoev must have known of the former translation however, for in the colophon translated in Cleaves (1954: 25-26) he mentions it specifically. He also mentions that he has based himself on the commentary by a “Boḡda Darm-a Rinč’in”, which I suspect must be rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen’s (1364-1432) *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’I ’grel pa*.¹⁵¹ In 1976 A. Luvsanbalden published an edition of chapter ten in Mongolian.¹⁵² I have not, however, so far been able to acquire a copy of this book, and a positive identification of which edition it is taken from, or whether it is an independent translation, will have to wait.

Since the start of the rule of the Dalai Lamas in Tibet in the 17th Century the dGe lugs sect of Tibetan Buddhism became the most influential also in Mongolia. Monasteries and education programs were based on the Tibetan model, and the Tibetan language almost superseded the Mongolian in importance within the religious sphere. As was the case in Tibet, the BCA was probably a central text within monastic education also in Mongolia. From the 1920s to the early 1990s there was severe religious repression in Mongolia due to Soviet communist influence. Today Buddhism is again flourishing. There is renewed interest for the ancient Mongolian Buddhist tradition, and Tibetan teachers are again influential in the renewal. As it has played such an important part in the history of Mongolian Buddhism, and as Tibetan teachers usually put great emphasis on it, the BCA will probably still play an important part in Mongolian Buddhism in the future.

6. Recent developments

Over the last 100+ years the BCA has moved beyond its traditional areas of South and North-east Asia. This process was first started with the birth of religious and oriental studies in the academic environments of Europe, and gained momentum through the 19th Century. The British rule of India enabled scholars to get long-term access to previously unknown material, both through personal accounts and through archaeological excavations and manuscripts. Initially the interest was fuelled by the colonial powers need to understand their subjects in order to rule more efficiently. Several of the earliest Indologists were officials employed by

¹⁵¹ rGyal tshab was the disciple of the founder of the dGe lugs school Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419). Another student of Tsong kha pa was dGe ’dun grub (1391-1474), whose line of reincarnations would later be awarded the title Dalai Lama by the Mongol ruler Altan Qaan (1507-1582). The dGe lugs in time became the most influential sect in Mongolian Buddhism.

¹⁵² A. Luvsanbalden (1976), *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Ulan Bator.

the British rulers, such as the previously mentioned Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894). Through his work as a civil servant in Nepal Hodgson were among those who gave the academic community access to a literal treasure trove of previously unknown manuscript material that had been stored in the Kathmandu Valley for up to a Millennium. Several of these manuscripts contained the BCA, and due to them the wider scholarly world were introduced to Śāntideva and his BCA in 1889 when the Russian Indologist Ivan P. Minayev published the first edition based on three of these newly discovered manuscripts.¹⁵³

The text was received with enthusiasm, and was quickly regarded as one of the central texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism, a branch of Buddhism that had not yet received as much interest as its older sibling, the more sombre Theravāda tradition of Sri Lanka that the West had first been introduced to. Minayev was the first to set the text in context, as together with his 1889 edition he also gave a short account of the life of its author Śāntideva based on that given by the Tibetan historian Tāranātha (1575-1634).¹⁵⁴ Minayev's work launched what would prove to be a long-lasting interest in the BCA within academic circles, an interest that would inspire not only Indologists, but also scholars of other regions of Asia such as China and Mongolia, as ancient translations of the text were also found elsewhere. It would also inspire philosophers to attempt to tackle the to some extent revolutionary ethical aspects, seen from a Western perspective, that characterizes the practice of the bodhisattva, as well as the complicated Mādhyamika style logical arguments put forth to disprove the ontology of other Indian philosophical schools, including the “lesser” Buddhist schools of thought, such as for instance the idealist Vijñānavādins.

Minayev also launched what would prove to be a sustained interest in the production of ever more accurate translations of the text. Early on this interest can be said to have been mostly academic in orientation, for the most part executed by scholars of Sanskrit connected with academic institutions in Europe. Later on however, as the interest in Buddhism gained hold in Europe, translations executed by individuals with a more personal interest in Buddhism appeared. This wave of translations may well be regarded as a genuine “religious” continuation of the tradition of the BCA, as many of these translators do indeed consider

¹⁵³ This and other manuscript work on the BCA will be discussed in a later chapter.

¹⁵⁴ Minayev (1889: 226-228); see the section on India for more on Tāranātha's account; I would like to thank Valeria Gazizova (MA student at UiO) for preparing an English translation of this account, originally written in Russian.

themselves as upholders of the Buddhist religion, and, in some sense of the word, as missionaries of the Buddhist religion as it travels to, it is tempting to say, the West. It must be noted, however, that this use of the term “West” is indeed somewhat problematic. As a survival of the old colonial distinction between the “modern” West, as represented by Europe, and the “backward” East, as represented by the newly conquered lands of Asia, the term does not really apply anymore. “Modernity” has also reached Asia, and so when we in this chapter consider the recent developments of the BCA we will not only look at its travels to the “West” as represented by the European cultures of the World, but at its travels into modernity, whether it be France, Japan, or, indeed, India.¹⁵⁵

The BCA has by now been translated so many times and into so many languages that it will be impossible, and probably not helpful, to give a comprehensive account of it all here. Translations can be found in Bengali,¹⁵⁶ Danish,¹⁵⁷ Dutch,¹⁵⁸ English,¹⁵⁹ Estonian,¹⁶⁰ French,¹⁶¹ German,¹⁶² Hindi,¹⁶³ Italian,¹⁶⁴ Japanese,¹⁶⁵ Norwegian,¹⁶⁶ Polish,¹⁶⁷ and Spanish,¹⁶⁸ to mention those that I have so far been able to locate. As already mentioned these translations can be divided roughly into academic and religious translations, although this division can not be considered strict. Some translators with an obvious personal interest in Buddhism, who consider themselves practicing Buddhists, hold academic positions and follow academic criteria when translating.¹⁶⁹ Still, the division will be of help as it highlights the intention of the translator. Roughly speaking, one type of translator follows the ideal of a distanced academic considering the history of human thought and a religious tradition, while the other considers himself a contributor to that tradition and a member of a movement wishing to spread the thoughts of Śāntideva. A key term in this context is perhaps “lineage”,

¹⁵⁵ Melis (2005) presents a survey of some of the recent developments in the translation of the BCA.

¹⁵⁶ Mukhopādhyāya (1962).

¹⁵⁷ Lindtner (1981).

¹⁵⁸ Ensink (1955) and Kloppenborg (1980).

¹⁵⁹ Barnett (1947), Chöpel (1940s), Matics (1970), Sweet (1976), Batchelor (1979), Gyatso (1988, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, and 2005), Gyatso (1989 and 2002), Parmananda (1990), Sonam (1990), Padmakara (1993, 1997, 1999, and 2008), Oldmeadow (1994), Crosby (1996), Wallace (1997), Cooper (1998), Thrangu (1999), Brunhölzl (2004), and Chodron (2005).

¹⁶⁰ Mäll (1982).

¹⁶¹ Finot (1920), Ansermet (1985), Tri Lai, Thich (2001), and Padmakara (1993).

¹⁶² Schmidt (1923), Winternitz (1930), Steinkellner (1981), Koss (2004), Scmidt (2005), and Driessens (1993).

¹⁶³ Shastri (1955), Tripathi (1989), Sharma (1990), and Siṃha (1993).

¹⁶⁴ Tucci (1925), Pezzali (1975 and 1982), and Gnoli (1983).

¹⁶⁵ Kanakura (1958) and Kawaguchi (1921).

¹⁶⁶ Lie (2003).

¹⁶⁷ Unknown (1980).

¹⁶⁸ Villalba (1993).

¹⁶⁹ Such as is the case with Wallace (1997).

which is something of central importance when claiming authenticity within Buddhism, especially Tibetan Buddhism. The translators working from within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition put great emphasis on which teachers they have received the text from, and on which teacher or which commentary they have gone for guidance. We will also look into more general discussions, academic and religious, of the contents of the BCA. In this context we will concentrate on one example, among the many available, from each. As an academic contribution we will look at Williams (2000) and some of the responses that it generated. As a religious contribution we will look at the 14th Dalai Lama's many books on the BCA.

Academic translations

The first attempt at a translation of the BCA was by the Belgian scholar Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1869-1938) in 1892. La Vallée Poussin published his French translation in stages in the academic journal *Le Muséon*, beginning with chapters 1-4 and 10, which must have been the ones he considered the easiest. He introduced his work with a discussion of the philosophical contents of the BCA, its broader place in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and expanded on the biography of Śāntideva previously presented by Minayev. Chapter 5 followed in 1896, also with an introduction which, in addition to a discussion of the contents of the chapter, also contained corrections proposed for the Sanskrit edition by Minayev. La Vallée Poussin had two other manuscripts of the BCA kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris at his disposal, and improved on Minayev's edition with these. Through his work on the manuscripts of the BCAT and BCAP (commentaries to the BCA important particularly for an understanding of the complicated chapter 9) and their publication by him in 1898 and 1901-14, he was able to complete his translation of the BCA in a series of articles in the journal *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* in 1906-1907.¹⁷⁰ La Vallée Poussin's work on the BCA has been of incomparable importance for most, if not all, later academic work on the BCA, and his edition of the BCAP has superseded Minayev's edition as the primary source for an accurate account of the verses of the BCA.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ In this later translation he did not include the 10th chapter, as he considered it apocryphal.

¹⁷¹ In a later chapter, "Manuscripts of the BCA", we will discuss the accuracy of La Vallée Poussin's edition, and present at least one example of what appears to be an inaccuracy that has crept into La Vallée Poussin's work which was not there in Minayev's.

After the work of Minayev and La Vallée Poussin no further studies of significance on the Sanskrit edition of the BCA have appeared.¹⁷² The translations that have been done have been based on these editions and the canonical Tibetan translation. No modern translations have, as far as I am aware, been based on the Newari, Chinese, or Mongolian translations. The next translation, and the first into English, was published by L.D. Barnett, Professor of Sanskrit at the University College of London, in 1909. Barnett's is the only translation done in prose, without attempting to transmit some of the poetic beauty of the original. Furthermore it is not a complete translation. Barnett has only translated selected parts where the text "seemed needlessly prolix,"¹⁷³ and he has also left out practically the whole of chapter 9. He seems to have considered this chapter overly scholastic, and has instead focused on the sections that exhibit "fervent devotion and brotherly love".¹⁷⁴ After these initial translations many more translations have appeared, with the frequency of new translations rising sharply during the 1990s. The perhaps most accurate translation into English, and the one that will remain the standard reference work in the coming years, is the one by Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton published in 1996. This translation also contains a considerable amount of reference material and discussions of the details of the work. It is a translation that is standing on the shoulders of a long line of previous work, among which the doctoral thesis by Michael J. Sweet (1977) is perhaps the most important work for the understanding of the 9th chapter, *Prajñāpāramita*.

Religious translations

The earliest, and perhaps surprising, example of a religious translation into a language that can be labelled "modern" is the translation into Japanese by Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945) published in 1921. Until 1891 Kawaguchi was the head of the Zen Gohyaku rakan Monastery in Tokyo. He had a sincere interest in understanding Buddhist scriptures, and spent several years as a hermit studying Chinese Buddhist texts. The famed accuracy of the Tibetan Buddhist canon had reached him, and he had also heard of the recent discoveries of Sanskrit manuscripts in Nepal. Considering these as more direct sources for the Buddha's teachings he decided to travel to Tibet and India in order to get access to them. He first travelled to Tibet between 1897 and 1903, studying Tibetan and English with a newly acquainted friend Sarat

¹⁷² Those that have appeared, for instance the works of Vaidya (1960) and Bhaṭṭācārya (1960), are based solely on Minayev and La Vallée Poussin's previous editions, and have not considered any other manuscript witnesses; Lindtner has done some work on one ms., Pat. 196, but this has not lead to the publication of a new edition.

¹⁷³ Barnett (1947: 36).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Chandra Das, himself a famous Tibetologist.¹⁷⁵ He later made a second trip to India and Nepal to study Sanskrit. Kawaguchi published an account of his travels in the book *Three Years in Tibet* in 1909 with the help of the Theosophical society. As the first Japanese to travel to Tibet, Kawaguchi has been seen as a pioneer of the Japanese branch of Tibetology and studies of Buddhism. His interests seem, however, to have been fuelled primarily by a religious motivation, a personal interest for understanding the Buddhist teachings. Likewise with his translation of the BCA, a text which he must have become well acquainted with through his studies at monasteries in Tibet, and through the recent publications of the Sanskrit edition in India. It is probably safe to say that his motivation in translating it was that he thought it was an important text not readily available in Japan, and one that the Japanese Buddhist community could learn from.

The single most important event responsible for the world-wide spreading of the BCA in the second half of the 20th Century was the involuntary exile of a large group of Tibetans, including the religious and temporal leader of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (*bsTan 'dzin rgya mtsho*; 1935-), in 1959. Most of the refugees settled in India, setting up Tibetan communities and Buddhist monasteries aimed at preserving Tibetan identity and culture. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s the interest in Tibetan Buddhism spread to new countries as Tibetan religious teachers, previously inaccessible to foreigners in the, at times, quite isolated Tibet, travelled abroad. Foreigners also came to India in search for religious guidance, and the presence of the Dalai Lama attracted many. As will be dealt with extensively in a later chapter, where a teaching by the Dalai Lama on the BCA will be presented, the Dalai Lama has a personal preference for the BCA, and has said that it is one of his main inspirations in life.¹⁷⁶ He teaches it often. The first translation from the Tibetan edition was published by the American, and at that time Tibetan Buddhist monk, Stephen Batchelor in 1979. Batchelor had been asked by the Dalai Lama himself to prepare a translation of the BCA, and was also appointed a tutor, Geshe Ngawang Dargyey, to instruct him through the process. He was told to base himself on the commentary by the Tibetan bKa' gdams pa master dNgul chu rGyal sras thogs med bzang po (12th Century). The translation has remained influential in the Buddhist community, and was also used as the main translation during the teachings by the Dalai Lama in January of 2009 (as presented below). Recently

¹⁷⁵ Das published a Tibetan-English dictionary in 1903 which is still popular today.

¹⁷⁶ Crosby (1996: ix).

translations have appeared in many languages, mostly by individuals with a personal interest in Buddhism, and usually through the guidance of a Tibetan Buddhist teacher.¹⁷⁷

Academic work

The BCA has also given rise to several works that are not translations, but that deal with specific philosophical or ethical issues raised by the text. One of these that have stirred the most debate lately, is a book containing articles by Paul Williams, *Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvatāra: Altruism and Reality*, published in 1998. Williams, Reader in Indo-Tibetan Studies and Codirector of the Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Bristol, presents his interest in the BCA as a way to “take seriously Śāntideva’s invitation to us to engage with him in the meditation.”¹⁷⁸ His interests are mainly with doctrinal interpretations and critical philosophical analysis. The article that has caused most of the ensuing debate is found in chapter 5, entitled “The Absence of Self and the Removal of Pain”, containing the provocative subtitle “How Śāntideva Destroyed the Bodhisattva Path.” Two opponents, Mark Siderits and Jon Wetlesen, both skilled philosophers and clearly both enthusiastic and perhaps somewhat offended on account of this attack on Śāntideva, have taken up the lead left by Williams and present two detailed answers.¹⁷⁹

The thrust of Williams’ argument is based on verses 8.101-103 in which Śāntideva makes an argument for altruism. Śāntideva says that since the continuant (*saṃtāna*) and the collective (*samudāya*), a reference to the self (*ātman*), are like a row of people, or an army, they do not exist (as a single unit), and therefore there exists no one who owns suffering. Ownerless suffering does not have the distinctions “mine” and “other.” All will agree that suffering should be avoided, and since there can be no distinction between one’s own suffering and that of others, all suffering should therefore be avoided, also that of other people. The logical response to the existence of suffering in the world is therefore that one develops an altruistic attitude, wishing to remove all suffering, no matter who experiences it. Williams then makes the point that this argument is based on denying the existence of the person not only ultimately, but also the conventional me-construction that is a useful conceptual fiction when

¹⁷⁷ One example is the Padmakara Translation Group which has published translations in English and French under the guidance of Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche (b. 1963).

¹⁷⁸ Williams (2000: x).

¹⁷⁹ Siderits’ (2000) article is entitled “The Reality of Altruism: Reconstructing Śāntideva, while Wetlesen’s (2002) is entitled “Did Śāntideva Destroy the Bodhisattva Path?”

relating to other people. If we are to give up this conceptual distinction we will be left paralyzed, since our interventions in the world require conceptualizations in terms of the conventional truth in order to be able to distinguish who is experiencing suffering. By denying the conventional existence of the person Śāntideva has then, Williams claims, destroyed the Bodhisattva path. I will not go into detail concerning the responses given by Siderits and Wetlesen, but suffice it to say that they point out that Williams' analysis sees Śāntideva's argument as strictly reductive, and that he has not paid heed to other alternative interpretations of the verses. They are therefore not persuaded by Williams' arguments, but they still gladly welcome the debate, and Siderits praises Williams' article as "a masterful blend of two elements seldom successfully combined: a scholarly investigation of the tradition and a critical philosophical interrogation of some of the tradition's more important theories and arguments."¹⁸⁰

Religious commentaries and self-help books

In the field of modern religious commentaries I wish to highlight, again, the Dalai Lama's contribution, which has been particularly rich and varied. As he often teaches on the BCA he has been a continuous inspiration to the many that have ended up translating the work, and many of his talks have also ended up in book form. These are mostly in the form of self-help books so popular to the modern mind, being sold also outside of the traditional Buddhist milieu, in bookstores and at airports across the world. One such book is *Healing Anger*, where the Dalai Lama comments freely on the 6th chapter of the BCA, that on patience. He writes loosely on the verses of the BCA on the importance of developing love, compassion, and tolerance in order to overcome difficulties. Another book, where he follows the verses more strictly while commenting, is *A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night*, basically a transcript of a teaching he gave in Dordogne, France, in 1991. This work contains a selection of verses from the BCA and Dalai Lama's short comments on how they relate to daily life and Buddhist practice. As one of the main proponents of the text, and an influential religious character and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who often meets with world leaders, the BCA owes much of its wider popularity today to the Dalai Lama.

¹⁸⁰ Another philosophical work that deals specifically with the ethical aspects of Śāntideva's philosophy is Brassard (2000).

7. A teaching on the BCA by the 14th Dalai Lama

As part of my research for this thesis I arrived in Sarnath, near Varanasi (India), on Christmas Eve, 2008. My plan was to attend a lecture that was to be held there by the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (*bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho*; 1935-), on January 8th-14th, 2009. I arrived early in order to first learn a little about the historic surroundings, and also to secure a place to stay, expecting that the seminar would be immensely popular as is usually the case with the Dalai Lama's public appearances. Owing to his popularity as a Buddhist teacher and a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate the Dalai Lama is a sought after lecturer, frequently giving talks around the world on issues ranging from Buddhist philosophy and practice, social and political issues, and the links between science and spirituality.¹⁸¹ For many years it has been the tradition that the Dalai Lama gives a one-week lecture on Buddhism near his residence in Dharamsala, India, often on the topic of the BCA. This lecture was cancelled for 2009, but fortunately for my thesis another lecture was instead to be held at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) in Sarnath. Apart from the frequent lectures he has given on the BCA the Dalai Lama has also published, or been instrumental in the publishing of, several books concerned with the text.¹⁸² Consequently, as he can be considered one of the present key proponents of the tradition of the BCA I found it fitting to include a chapter in this thesis presenting a lecture on this text by the Dalai Lama. This is done to illustrate how the text is still of central importance to Buddhism in general, and Tibetan Buddhism in particular, at a time when it is spreading also beyond its traditional areas in North and South Asia. Also, it will show how the text is used in practice to instruct Buddhists and, as the Dalai Lama often points out, anyone else, regardless of religious affiliation, who is interested in leading a life in accordance with the principles of a bodhisattva.

The setting

Sarnath, the place where Buddha Śākyamuni's first lecture is said to have been held, is a place of central importance to Buddhists, and is one of four principle Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India, the others being Lumbini (where he was born), Bodhgaya (where he attained

¹⁸¹ The official website of the Dalai Lama lists planned public appearances from March to August of 2009 in Dharamsala, India, Santa Barbara, USA, Copenhagen, Denmark, Kaza, India, Frankfurt, Germany, and Lausanne/Prilly, Switzerland. The title of these talks range from "Nagarjuna's Commentary on Bodhicitta & Kamalashila's The Middling Stages of Meditation", "Ethics for Our Time", to "*One World One Mind One Heart* on the subject of global responsibilities with selected scientists and and/or political personalities". <http://dalailama.com/page.60.htm> (extracted from the internet on the 24th of January, 2009).

¹⁸² See for instance Batchelor (1979) and Gyatso (1988, 1994a, and 1994b).

awakening), and Kushinagar (where he passed away). Tradition holds that this is the place where the Buddha, after having attained awakening, arrived to meet his five former spiritual companions whom he saw fit to understand his newly acquired insights. Today the area is home to several recently established monasteries representing all the major Buddhist traditions of the world, as well as ruins of ancient monasteries and *stūpas* (burial mounds) of different sizes that bear witness to a long and prominent history. On the outskirts of this historic site the CIHTS was established in 1967 by prime minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in consultation with the Dalai Lama “with a view to educate the youths of Tibet and the Himalayan border region”.¹⁸³

When I arrived in the small village of Sarnath two weeks before the lecture the place was relatively quiet. There was a slow trickle of day-trip tourists coming on busses from Varanasi, the major city nearby, to visit the archaeological museum and the excavated ruins on display. It was easy to get a place to stay, and only a few of those attending the lecture of the Dalai Lama had arrived. Over the next two weeks leading up to the arrival of the Dalai Lama the little community changed almost into the unrecognizable. The few hotels and guesthouses were quickly filled and tents were erected wherever there was space. New restaurants were established at an impressive rate, and thick traffic filled the streets. Hundreds of Tibetan monks arrived, mostly from the major dGe lugs monasteries of Tibet that have been re-established in the South of India, dGa’ ldan, ’Bras spungs, Se ra, etc., and they were housed in large monastic tents. In all 26000 people arrived from all over India and various countries around the world to attend the lecture. The main attraction that drew this impressive crowd was undoubtedly the Dalai Lama himself. The overwhelming majority of those present were Buddhists of a Tibetan cultural background living along India’s Northern border.¹⁸⁴ In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition the incarnations of the Dalai Lama, of which Tenzin Gyatso is the 14th, hold a prominent position both spiritually and politically. They have been revered teachers and lineage holders of the dGe lugs sect, and, from the 5th Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) came to power aided by a Mongol ruler, until 1959, when China took over all administration and the 14th Dalai Lama had to flee to India, they held the highest political office of Tibet.¹⁸⁵ His prominent place of importance as a symbol of religion and of

¹⁸³ <http://www.smith.edu/cihts/pagesenglish/history.htm> (extracted from the internet on the 24th of January 2009).

¹⁸⁴ This became clear as the Dalai Lama asked the audience where they were from, mentioning areas such as Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, etc., whereupon different parts of the audience called out in reply.

¹⁸⁵ See Smith (1997) for an account of the rule of the Dalai Lamas.

political unity among Tibetan Buddhists can hardly be overestimated. The Dalai Lamas were also from the 5th Dalai Lama onward considered to be emanations of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara. To many the present Dalai Lama represents an awakened being, a Buddha in person.

The lecture was surrounded by tight security. Each attendee had to register their passport beforehand and received a photo identity card. At the entrance all were searched with metal-detectors. Well inside those who could read Tibetan received a free copy of the texts that were to be taught, specially printed for this occasion. It had been announced beforehand that in addition to the BCA the Bhāvanākrama, part 2, (BhK)¹⁸⁶ by Kamalaśīla (8th Century) was also to be taught. There were no chairs. People were seated on the ground facing an approximately five meter tall platform that had been erected for the occasion. There seemed to be dedicated areas for ordained monks and nuns, lay people, and foreigners, but this arrangement was not strictly practiced. People took a seat where it suited them. The platform was lavishly decorated, and on top there stood a one meter tall throne where the Dalai Lama would sit. Above him hung thangkas (*thang ka*), painted banners, of past masters of the different Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Notable in his characteristic yellow hat was the thangka depicting Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), the founder of the dGe lugs tradition of which the Dalai Lama is the supreme leader. Prior to each teaching session prayers were chanted for approximately an hour. These were chanted by a group of monks and broadcast through speakers set up all over the spectator ground as well as on the streets outside. Part of the chants were in the form of throat-singing (or overtone-singing), a characteristic part of Tibetan Buddhist chanting where the singer manipulates the vocal cord and air flow to produce two or more sounds at the same time. The chants were partly prayers, partly Vajrayāna meditation practices, among them the practice of Avalokiteśvara containing the characteristic six-syllable mantra (invocation) “oṃ manipadme huṃ”. When the Dalai Lama entered all that were able rose to their feet, and the throat-singing reached a crescendo. I was told that this was done to keep evil spirits away while the Dalai Lama took his seat. Before being seated the Dalai Lama performed three prostrations facing the throne he was to be seated on. This gesture is traditionally performed by Tibetan Buddhist teachers to show their respect to the masters that have come before them, and is a sign of humility towards the task

¹⁸⁶ Bhāvanākrama, “Stages of Meditation”, is a meditation manual following the Yogācāra-Mādhyamika tradition.

of teaching that lies ahead. After the Dalai Lama had been seated most of those present performed three prostrations towards the throne before also taking their seats.

The lecture

The Dalai Lama began by welcoming everyone. He first directed his attention towards the ordained monks and nuns and talked about how fortunate it is to be able to receive ordination. He went on to say that this is not something one should take lightly. It is a great opportunity that should not be wasted, and he encouraged them to not only listen to the Buddha's teachings, but to actually practice them in their own lives. The core of the Buddha's teachings, he continued, is the concept of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), a term that would come up frequently throughout his explanation of the texts. In Mahāyāna Buddhism it is the idea that all things are interconnected, subject to causes and conditions, and on ultimate analysis can be said to be "empty" (*śūnyatā*) as they do not have independent existence. Its philosophical ramifications are dealt with specifically in the 9th chapter of the BCA. In his short introductory discussion of this concept the Dalai Lama brought up the challenges of global warming as a good example of this. Global warming, he suggested, is a result of humankind not paying heed to the effects our lifestyle can have on the environment. It is a worldwide problem and one that illustrates that our lives are all interconnected, and that no solution can be reached if the whole world does not work together to solve it. When we understand how interdependent our lives are we will easily develop compassion for our fellow beings who we see are in the same situation as our selves. In this short introduction then the Dalai Lama elegantly summed up the central teaching of Mahāyāna, the need to develop wisdom (*prajñā*), the insight into dependent origination, and skillful means (*upāyakaśalya*), compassionate techniques that can alleviate the suffering (*duḥkha*) of the world.¹⁸⁷

The Dalai Lama spoke in Tibetan, the mother tongue of the majority of those present, while parallel translations into English, Chinese, and Japanese were broadcast locally over FM frequencies. Radios were on sale outside the teaching venue. The translation into English was done by one of the Dalai Lama's official monk-translators, and the clarity and flow of the translation was quite impressive. After a discussion of the meaning of the term *dharma* ("teaching/law/reality"), the Dalai Lama started his discussion of the texts by telling the

¹⁸⁷ For a discussion of these terms see Williams (1989), and introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism built up around these central concepts.

audience which teachers he himself had received these teachings from.¹⁸⁸ This relates to the central position that lineage holds in Tibetan Buddhism. In Tibet, as well as in for instance the Zen/Chan/Son tradition of Northern Asia, it was important as a stamp of authenticity to be able to trace the lineage of ones tradition back to its origins in India, and ultimately back to the Buddha. In Tantra, a term which can also be translated as “lineage”, this was of central importance as the teachings were transmitted in secrecy from one teacher to one student. It therefore became an important part of the ritual of teaching that Tibetan teachers reiterate how they received the teaching, and often trace the lineage they are part of several generations back in time, as did the Dalai Lama in our case here. It can be interpreted as one of the central exercises of religious legitimacy and claims to canonicity in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, showing that what is to follow is not just something that comes to the speaker’s mind as he goes along, but is part of an age-old established tradition.

The two texts were taught in parallel. The lecture was mainly built up around the verses of the BCA, and, where relevant, passages from the BhK were inserted. All sections did not receive the same attention. While some verses were commented on extensively, others were only read through, and some were skipped altogether. The first two verses, the homage and the reason for composing, were commented on in detail. In the first half stanza, “| *bde gshegs chos kyi sku mnga’ sras ’cas dang | phyag ’os kun la’ang gus par phyag ’tshal te ||*”,¹⁸⁹ the different references of the terms mentioned were elaborated on, and interestingly it was suggested that *bde gsegs* (“bliss-gone-one”), a term usually referring to the Buddha, could also refer to bodhisattvas. As is explained in verse 1.15¹⁹⁰ of the BCA bodhicitta (“the awakening mind”) has two divisions, the motivating force (*praṇidhicitta*) and the actual praxis (*prasthāna*). In this first chapter it was pointed out that the motivating force is what is highlighted. Over several verses we were given examples illustrating how precious and unique bodhicitta is, for instance it is as rare as a lightning that illumines the night (verse 1.5) and as potent as the philosopher’s stone that can turn any metal into gold (verse 1.10). On verse 1.28, “| *sdug bsngal ’dor ’dod sems yod kyang | sdug bsngal nyid la mngon par rgyug | bde ba ’dod kyang*

¹⁸⁸ The teachers the Dalai Lama mentioned were his teacher Tenzin Gyaltzen, the Kunu Rinpoche [1885-1977; see Gyaltzen (1994a: 1)], who again received it from Patrul Rinpoche (*dpal sprul rin po che*; 1808-87). Another lineage he mentioned was the one from Trulshik Rinpoche Ngawang Chökyi Lodrö (*khrul zhig ngag dbang chos kyi blo gros*; 1923-), who again received it from Lhondrup (?), a previous throne holder of Ganden monastery.

¹⁸⁹ Tg la 1b2-3; ”To the bliss-gone-ones, with the body of dharma, with their sons, and all who are worthy of veneration, I respectfully pay homage.”

¹⁹⁰ Verse numbers are according to Batchelor (1979).

gti mug pas | ran gi bde ba dgra ltar 'joms ||"¹⁹¹, the Dalai Lama gave two examples that illustrate well his position as someone who has one leg firmly within the tradition, while at the same time wishing to renew it and make it relevant in the modern world. First the verse was related to the Second World War: For what they believed to be the common good some people committed heinous crimes against their fellow men, apparently a reference to Nazi-Germany. As the verse points out they wished for happiness, but in the end only caused more misery for themselves and others, and their aims were not even fulfilled. From my own experience living and studying in a Tibetan monastery,¹⁹² although this is my personal opinion and can not be backed by any statistics, Tibetan monks trained in the traditional setting do not have much knowledge of European history in general, or the Second World War in particular. Such references are rarely made when such a text as the BCA is being taught in a monastery. In this respect I would suggest that the Dalai Lama is to some degree quite unorthodox in his approach to teaching Buddhism.¹⁹³ The second example was that of the financial crisis that has caused problems world-wide particularly over the last 6 months (second half of 2008). The Dalai Lama had talked to a friend about this who he said was an expert in the field. This friend had told him that the crisis was caused by the excessive greed of a few people who wished to make a lot of money with little effort. Again, the Dalai Lama said, this highlights the manner in which we are all interconnected, that we need to consider our fellow beings in all that we do, and that transparency and honesty is important. Between commenting on the actual verses the Dalai Lama also discussed more general issues. At the start of the second day he began by discussing religions in general and gave his thoughts on how they had come into being. There were three basic questions, he said, that had caused humans to develop religious thinking: Is there a self? Is there a beginning to self? and, Is there an end to self?¹⁹⁴ He then went into an extensive discussion on these issues, relating some ideas of the different religions, mainly Indian systems of thought, with the answers Buddhism proposes. On the issue of the beginning of the self he suggested that a modern view might be that it began with the Big Bang.¹⁹⁵ This has to be seen in view of the classic

¹⁹¹ Tg la 3a5-6; "Even though eager to escape suffering, they run after that same suffering. Even though they wish for happiness, they are deluded, and therefore fight their own suffering like an enemy."

¹⁹² Referring to my own stay at Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling Monastery in Boudhanath, Kathmandu, Nepal, from 2002 until 2006.

¹⁹³ For another example of this, relating especially to the traditional Buddhist world view in relation with modern science, see Gyatso (2005).

¹⁹⁴ These questions can be related to the 14 questions the Buddha refused to answer, see Gyatso (2005: 82-83), where questions 1-8 concern whether the self and the universe are eternal, transient, both, or neither, and whether they have a beginning, no beginning, both, or neither.

¹⁹⁵ See Gyatso (2005) for the Dalai Lama's views on the Big Bang theory.

Buddhist idea of rebirth, in which the self continues from lifetime to lifetime, but without a substantial essence. It is merely the result of conditioning in which from time without beginning beings have been conditioned due to ignorance to continue their existence in *saṃsāra* (cyclic existence). From a modern scientific point of view this “beginningless” beginning might, as the Dalai Lama suggested, have been the Big Bang, which is as far science has come with regard to the origin of the universe. The next question then, the Dalai Lama continued, is when this took place. In his discussions with scientists he had been told different figures ranging between 5 and 25 billion years ago. One scientist he had talked to at CERN¹⁹⁶ had assured him that it happened 12 billion years ago, whereupon he humorously remarked to the audience that with the uncertainty clearly present concerning this point we might have to resort to divination in order to settle all doubts. Continuing on the same issue he related the theory of the Big Bang with the worldview found in the Kālacakra Tantra.¹⁹⁷ This system of thought proposes that the universe goes through 4 periods, which together constitutes one “great period” (*mahākalpa*), similar to the way an expanding and then contracting Big Bang-universe would function. In this “great period” the universe develops, persists, and is destroyed, before there is a period of vacuity. This process had no beginning and will repeat itself infinitely. There is also an infinite number of such universes. The aim of making this comparison was not altogether clear to me during the lecture. Clearly, judging from the enthusiastic manner in which the Dalai Lama discussed these points, this manner of comparison was something he found very interesting and worthwhile spending time on. In his newly published book *The Universe in a Single Atom*¹⁹⁸ the Dalai Lama tells us that he has long had a keen interest in science. His aim, he says, is not “to unite science and spirituality” but “to examine two important human disciplines for the purpose of developing a more holistic and integrated way of understanding the world around us, one that explores deeply the seen and the unseen, through the discovery of evidence bolstered by reason.” Clearly the Dalai Lama values debate and dialogue highly, and it seemed to me during the lecture that he was not so interested in providing the audience with orthodox answers as he was with introducing them to new ways of looking at things. He continued his talk saying that it is important that there is a wide variety of different religions and ideological traditions in the world that can fill the needs of different types of people. This should not be seen as a problem, but as a cause of celebration. And, as I have also heard him say at other occasions before, it is

¹⁹⁶ European Organization for Nuclear Research located along the Franco-Swiss border near Geneva.

¹⁹⁷ See Gyatso (1999, 1985) for the Dalai Lama’s own commentary on the Kālacakra Tantra.

¹⁹⁸ Gyatso (2005).

best if one keeps to one's own religious tradition. One should respect all traditions, but have faith in one's own.

As a working outline of the BCA the Dalai Lama referred to a verse employed by dPal sprul rin po che (1808-87) to explain the text:¹⁹⁹ *byang chub sems mchog rin po che | ma skyes pa rnam skye gyur cig | skyes pa nyams pa med pa yang | gong nas gong du 'phel bar shog ||*.²⁰⁰ This might be a reference to his book *Words of My Perfect Teacher*²⁰¹ in which the verse is employed in the context of taking the bodhisattva's vow. It might also be a reference to the commentary to the BCA written by dPal sprul rin po che's student mKhan po Kun bzang dpal ldan (1862-1943),²⁰² who one can expect followed his teacher's way of explaining the text, and where the verse is employed in the same way.²⁰³ The Dalai Lama explained that this verse highlights the four major parts of the text. The first line, "May the precious mind of awakening arise in those it has not arisen," refers to chapters one through three of the BCA where we are concerned with the initial generation of bodhicitta. The second line, "and where it has arisen may it not wane, but further and further increase," highlights the other three parts: chapters four through six that prevent the decrease of bodhicitta where it is already present; chapters seven through nine that not only prevent the decrease, but cause it to grow further and further; and chapter ten in which the result of this activity is dedicated for the benefit of all.

After his initial discussion of chapter one and the great value of bodhicitta, chapters two and three were explained as constituting the traditional seven-limbed practice²⁰⁴ or supreme practice (*anuttarapūjā*).²⁰⁵ The practice in this context consists, as previously discussed, of worship (*pūjā*; 2.1-25), refuge (*śaraṇagamana*; 2.26, 46-54), confession (*pāpadeśanā*; 2.27-45, 55-66), rejoicing in merit (*anumodanā*; 3.1-3), requesting the teaching (*adhyeṣaṇā*; 3.4),

¹⁹⁹ A Nyingma teacher famed for having popularized the teachings of the BCA in the Kham district of Tibet.

²⁰⁰ "May the precious mind of awakening arise in those it has not arisen; and where it has arisen may it not wane, but further and further increase."

²⁰¹ Patrul Rinpoche (2002, 1994: 221); the verse has been used in many works previous to dPal sprul rin po che, and is ultimately attributed to Nāgārjuna. I have not been able to trace this source.

²⁰² mKhan chen Kun bzang dpal ldan Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa, *Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig 'grel 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thig ma bzhugs so*; translated by Kretschmar (2003-) and Kunzang Palden (2007).

²⁰³ Ibid. pp. 210-211.

²⁰⁴ This practice, although traditionally termed the seven-limbed practice, also sometimes contains eight or nine limbs, as is the case here where there are eight limbs.

²⁰⁵ Note that these two chapters, as previously discussed, originally comprised a single chapter in the Dunhuang recension.

begging the Buddhas not to abandon beings (*yācanā*; 3.5), dedication of merit (*pariṇāmanā*; 3.6-21), and giving rise to bodhicitta (*bodhicittotpāda*; 3.22-33).²⁰⁶ As many of these verses speak well for themselves the Dalai Lama did not elaborate extensively here. He read through them slowly, pausing for short comments here and there, generally giving the impression that these were verses that should be savoured and taken to heart. As will be shown below, verses from this section are central in the transference of the bodhisattva's vow (*bodhisattva-saṃvara*), and several of the verses are found in popular Tibetan Buddhist meditation manuals.²⁰⁷ The Dalai Lama also employed these two chapters when transferring the bodhisattva's vow to the audience, as will be discussed below. Verses 3.22-23, the Dalai Lama said, sums up the bodhisattva's vow: "||*ji ltar sngon gyi bde gshegs kyis | byang chub thugs ni bskyed pa dang | byang chub sems dpa'i bslab pa la | de dag rim bzhin gnas pa ltar | de bshin 'gro la phan don du | byang chub sems ni bskyed bgyi zhing | de bzhin du ni bslab pa la 'ang | rim pa bzhin du bslab par bgyi ||*".²⁰⁸

The next three chapters then, according to Patrul Rinpoche, concern how to retain bodhicitta. To do this vigilance (*apramāda*; ch.4), guarding of awareness (*samprajñānyarakṣaṇa*; ch.5), and the perfection of patience (*kṣāntipāramitā*; ch.6) are of central importance. First, as the bodhisattva's vow has now been received, one should be vigilant in maintaining the commitment one has made, as to transgress it is a most heinous offense (4.8). Again the Dalai Lama made several references to modern science, this time to the field of biology: In connection with verses 4.28-29,²⁰⁹ concerning how the disturbing emotions (*kleśa*) can overpower us and make us lose our balance, some findings in neuroscience were brought into the discussion. When we get angry, the Dalai Lama explained, it has been shown that blood flows into the arms as a biological defence mechanism. From nature then we are programmed to act on our anger. We can train in avoiding anger taking over control of

²⁰⁶ See Crosby (1996) for a fuller discussion of this.

²⁰⁷ See for instance the preliminary practices (*sngon 'gro*) of the Karma Kagyu (*kar ma bka' brgyud*) tradition by the 9th Karma pa, dBang phyug rdo rje, *Sgrub brgyud rin po che'i phreng ba karma kaṃ tshang rtogs pa'i don brgyud las byung ba'i gsung dri ma med pa rnam bkod nas ngag 'don rgyun khyer gyi rim pa 'phags lam bgrod pa'i shing rta*. For a discussion of this practice see Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (*kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas*; 1813-1899) (1977).

²⁰⁸ Tg la 7b2-3; "Just as the sugatas of old gave rise to bodhicitta and went through the stages of practice of a bodhisattva, in like manner will I too, for the benefit of beings, give rise to bodhicitta and go through the same stages of training."

²⁰⁹ Tg la 9a4-5; "||*zhe sdang sred sogs dgra rnam ni | rkang lag la sogs yod min la | dpa' mdzangs min yang ji zhing ltar | de dag gis bdag bran bzhin byas | bdag gi sems la gnas bzhin du | dga' mgur bdag la gnod byed pa | de la 'ang mi khro bzod pa ni | gnas min bzod pa smad pa'i gnas ||*"

ourselves by contemplating the lack of a self. Again, in the context of verse 4.34²¹⁰ where the author laments the uselessness of human existence in which one is overpowered by these disturbing emotions, the Dalai Lama related this with scientific findings showing that anger and fear can actually destroy the immune system. He had attended a scientific conference once where data were presented showing a connection between the use of the words “I”, “mine”, “me”, etc., and an increased risk of suffering a heart-attack. The audience was advised then to be vigilant with regard to disturbing emotions, especially selfishness.

When practicing the perfections (*pāramitā*) of generosity (*dāna*) and discipline (*śīla*)²¹¹ it all comes down to guarding one’s awareness (ch.5). Without awareness, we were told, all dharma-practice will be in vain. Just like one protects a wound in order to avoid unnecessary pain, in like manner one should protect one’s mind against disturbing emotions (5.19-20). In the end of the chapter is a list of works one can consult regarding the practice of awareness (5.103-106). In this connection the Dalai Lama encouraged the audience to be critical towards teachers and examine them thoroughly before accepting what they have to teach. He said there are many spiritual teachers around these days, and all do not have a genuine motivation. In the context of chapter six, concerned with the perfection of patience (*kṣānti*), a long digression was again made concerning the importance of respect towards other traditions, in this case especially within Buddhism itself. It was not appropriate, he said, that the Theravāda tradition is referred to as the lower vehicle (*hinayāna*) as is often done in Tibetan Buddhism. We are all followers of the same teacher, the Buddha, and have the teachings of *vinaya* (discipline) and *abhidharma* (metaphysics) in common. Also within the Tibetan tradition there is the Bön-religion which is very similar to Buddhism in many respects. We should therefore strive for unity, and, as mentioned before, celebrate this diversity.

The next three chapters then, according to dPal sprul rin po che, are concerned not only with preventing the decrease of bodhicitta, but causing it to grow further and further. These three deal with enthusiasm (*vīrya*, ch.7), meditative concentration (*dhyāna*, ch.8), and transcendent wisdom (*prajñā*, ch.9). In the chapter on enthusiasm they main obstacle to overcome is laziness (*ālasya*) of which there are three types: indolence (*viṣādā*), being drawn towards evil

²¹⁰ Tg la 9a7-b1; ”| *de ltar yun ring rgyun chags dgrar gyur pa | gnod pa’i tshogs rab ’phel ba’i rgyu gcig pu | bdag gi snying la nges par gnas ’cha’ na | ’khor bar ’jigs med dga’ bar ga la ’gyur* ||.”

²¹¹ These first two of the six *pāramitās* do not have a chapter of their own, as the other four do, but are, according to the Dalai Lama, included under the headline of “guarding one’s awareness.”

(*kutsitāsakti*), and despondency (*ātmāvamanyanā*). These need to be overcome to make bodhicitta grow. The Dalai Lama commented on this by relating it to his own initial meeting with the idea of bodhicitta. When he arrived in India at the age of 24 he thought *nirvāṇa* (emancipation) sounded like a nice thing, but that bodhicitta was too difficult. After he received teachings on the BCA and had studied it for some years he slowly developed a better understanding of it, and he was able to develop it little by little. So, he said, one should not feel like this is too great a task, but go at it with enthusiasm. In the chapter on meditative concentration the Dalai Lama said that the main obstacle being dealt with here is attachment. Over a series of verses there are descriptions of the uncleanliness of the body, verses that are to be employed in meditation practices aimed at lessening one's attachment to one's own and others' bodies. In this context, and with certain other verses of the text, there have been criticisms of misogyny raised in recent times, and the Dalai Lama mentioned one female student who had had great problems with accepting the BCA for this reason. To this he said that the text had been initially taught in a setting where only monks were present, and that nuns and women in general should understand these verses to apply also to them. In these contexts the, for example, repulsive nature of the female body should likewise apply to the repulsive nature of the male body, and so forth. The 9th chapter concerning the perfection of transcendent wisdom was commented on rather briefly compared to the relative amount of emphasis it has usually received in many written commentaries known to me.²¹² The Dalai Lama started by giving a commentary on the perfection of wisdom mantra: “*gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.*”²¹³ This can be related to the five paths, the path of accumulation (*gate*), joining (*gate*), seeing (*paragate*), meditation (*parasamgate*), and no more learning (*bodhi svaha*), and as a symbolic traversing of these. On a humorous note he also related it to the five stages of life: childhood (*gate*), youth (*gate*), adulthood (*paragate*), old age (*parasamgate*), and death (*bodhi svaha*). He did not elaborate on this. In relation to verses 9.41-44 some thoughts were given on the authenticity of the Mahāyāna and Tantric teachings as words of the Buddha. In general it was suggested that, judging from internal evidence (mostly only bodhisattvas are present in the Mahāyāna *sūtras*), these teachings were not taught in public. They were only taught by the Buddha to students with pure states of

²¹² The earliest known commentary for instance, Prajñākaramatī's *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, spends close to half its space on this chapter alone.

²¹³ "Gone, gone, gone beyond, perfectly gone beyond, awakened!"

mind. Also, these teachings should, the Dalai Lama suggested, be judged on the grounds of their soteriological value, for that is indeed what really matters in the end.

Continuing the tradition

As part of the teaching the Dalai Lama transmitted the bodhisattva's vow to those in the audience who wished to receive it. This is a vow where the person commits to training in the practices of a bodhisattva, as laid out in the BCA, not only for the present lifetime, which is the duration of the *pratimokṣa* (individual liberation) vows, but until he or she has attained full and complete awakening (*samyaksambodhi*).²¹⁴ It was explained that there are several traditions within Tibetan Buddhism for the transference of the bodhisattva's vow: according to the teachings of Asaṅga (3rd-4th Century CE), of Śāntideva (7th Century), or according to several *tantras* that were not specified.²¹⁵ Here we would follow the tradition of Śāntideva. He specified that there were two ways of receiving it, as merely an aspiration or as an actual commitment, and in the latter case it should not be given up after once having been received. The manner in which one wished to receive it should be decided on beforehand, and then one should keep this mind state in the process of receiving it. First there was a description of the visualization one should keep when receiving it: Behind the Dalai Lama one should visualize the Buddha, along with all the past masters of Nālandā University,²¹⁶ as well as the great masters of other traditions, the Chinese, Korean, etc., depending on which tradition one had faith in. For those of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition one was told to visualize the three great ones, the king Khri Srong lde'u btsan (742-797; r. 755-797), Padmasambhava (8th Century), and Śāntarakṣita (8th Century), who are celebrated for having established Buddhism in Tibet. Along with them were the 25 great tantric adepts (the direct students of Padmasambhava), the masters of the bKa' gdams, Sa skya pa, and bKa' brgyud traditions, different subschools of these, and the master Tsong kha pa and his spiritual children. We were told to view the Dalai Lama as the messenger that transmits these traditions to us. For the actual ceremony all were told to start reading out loud along with the Dalai Lama from the beginning of chapter two, the seven-limbed practice.²¹⁷ After verse 22 of chapter three there was a pause where we were

²¹⁴ For a description of vows in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the three types being those pertaining to *pratimokṣa* (Hinayāna), *bodhisattva* (Mahāyāna), and *guhyantra* (Vajrayāna), see Ngari Panchen (*mnga' ris paṅ chen*; 1447/8-1542/3) (1996) and Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (2003, 1998).

²¹⁵ See Ngari Panchen (1996: 65) for a discussion of these lineages.

²¹⁶ The celebrated Buddhist institution that was situated in what is today the state of Bihar, India, from the 5th to the 12th Century, and which was the place Śāntideva is said to have lived.

²¹⁷ See previous discussion.

instructed to sit on our knees for the actual receiving of the vow in verses 22-23. These two verses were read section by section by the Dalai Lama and then repeated by the audience, three times over:

”Just as the sugatas of old gave rise to bodhicitta
and went through the stages of practice of a bodhisattva,
in like manner will I too, for the benefit of beings, give rise to bodhicitta
and go through the same stages of training.”²¹⁸

With this the vow had been received and the verses of rejoicing and conclusion, 3.24-33, were again read by everyone together with the Dalai Lama. Chapter 10 of the BCA was read through, with a few short comments here and there, as a conclusion to the lecture and to dedicate the merit. On the two last days the empowerments (*abhiṣeka*) into the Vajrayana practices of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā were bestowed, but a description of these is beyond this discussion.

The Dalai Lama has on other occasions said that the BCA is one of his main inspirations in his life, especially verse 10.55:²¹⁹ “| *ji srid nam mkha’ gnas pa dang* | *’gro ba ji srid gnas gyur pa* | *de srid bdag ni gnas gyur nas* | *’gro ba’i sdug bsngal sel bar shog* ||.”²²⁰ My impression throughout the lecture, from the dedication and humour he showed every day, was that introducing new audiences to the verses of the BCA is something the Dalai Lama takes great delight in. His use of anecdotes and personal experiences when teaching illustrate that he not only wants people to feel awe and respect towards the Buddhist teachings, but to take these verses to heart and use them in their daily lives. They are also not only for the chosen few who are regarded as bodhisattvas, but for anyone, irrespective of whether they are Buddhist or not, who may feel inspired by them. The continued encounter between science and Buddhism that the Dalai Lama facilitates,²²¹ and his continued reference to modern science in his lecture, may indicate that he values such exchange of ideas as something worthwhile in itself. It may also show his concern towards making Buddhism relevant in the modern world. The Dalai Lama has published, or been instrumental in the publishing of,

²¹⁸ Tg la 7b2-3.

²¹⁹ Crosby (1996: ix).

²²⁰ Tg la 40a2-3; ”For as long as space endures, and for as long as life remains, for that long may my existence be devoted to healing the sorrows of beings!”

²²¹ See for instance the Mind and Life Institute where the Dalai Lama is involved, <http://www.mindandlife.org/>, which has as its aim to “establish mutually respectful working collaboration and research partnerships between modern science and Buddhism.” http://www.mindandlife.org/mission.org_section.html (extracted from the internet on the 29th of January, 2009).

several books on the BCA.²²² He is one of the most prominent proponents of its teachings in the world today, and it is probably safe to say that he is at least one of several main reasons why the text enjoys the popularity it does also beyond the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

8. Manuscripts of the BCA

In November-December of 2008 I was able to spend three weeks at the Nepal Research Centre (NRC) in Kathmandu, part of the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (NGMCP).²²³ The aim of the trip was to investigate the Sanskrit (and possibly other) mss. of the BCA and commentaries to it listed in the NGMCP catalogue, and kept at the National Archives of Nepal or other archives and private collections.²²⁴ The work of registering and photographing these mss. was started in 1970, and since then many unknown treasures of South Asian literature have been revealed.²²⁵ The mss. of the BCA today kept in Nepal have not to my knowledge been studied previously. The other mss. of the BCA kept in Cambridge, Kolkata, London, Paris, and elsewhere,²²⁶ some employed for previous Sanskrit editions, were also mostly originally from Nepal as far as I have been able to gather.²²⁷ The aim of my research at the NRC was then to investigate whether the Sanskrit mss. still kept in Nepal could shed any new light on the text, whether they could usefully be employed in the production of a revised edition of the Sanskrit BCA, and whether the collection contained some commentaries of interest. With the limited time available to me for this investigation it was not possible to execute a detailed palaeographical study of the mss. It is my intention that

²²² See previous discussion on modern editions on the BCA.

²²³ Previously (1970-2002) known as the Nepal-German ms. Preservation Project (NGMPP); a joint project of the Government of Nepal and the German Oriental Society, financed by the German Research Council. An up-to-date catalogue of the mss. can be found at <http://134.100.72.204:3000/>. I would like to express my gratitude towards Dr. Albrecht Hanisch, Mr. Nam Raj Gurung, and the others at the centre for their hospitality and assistance.

²²⁴ The Tibetan mss. of the BCA catalogued by the NGMCP were not included in this investigation. The mss. kept at the Asha archives in Patan, Kathmandu, (see Nepal₂ in the appendix) are not catalogued by the NGMCP, and are therefore not part of this investigation. For a description of these see Yoshizaki (1991).

²²⁵ See the newsletter of the NGMCP, published online at http://www.uni-hamburg.de/ngmcp/index_e.html, for some examples of this.

²²⁶ See list of mss. in the appendix.

²²⁷ Principal figures in making mss. from Nepal available were Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-94), Cecil Bendall (1856-1906), and Mahāmahopādhyāya Hara Prasad Śāstri (1882-1956). Hodgson, who for a time was stationed as a British civil servant in Nepal, donated his collection of mss. to the Royal Asiatic Society, and these were distributed to libraries in Europe. His activities and legacy of are discussed in Waterhouse (2004). In Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917) are mentioned mss. of the BCA the author himself purchased in Nepal, and which are now stored at the Asiatic Society in Kolkata.

such a study, as well as a detailed study of the commentaries that were discovered, will constitute a further project planned on the topic of the BCA.

Previous manuscript-work

We will start our discussion by looking at the mss. employed for the editions of the BCA that have been published in the past. In his edition published in 1889 Ivan P. Minayev (1840-1890) employed three mss.: Lon. 2927, Lon. 13,²²⁸ and Unk. M.²²⁹ Minayev was a professor at the University of St Petersburg, and two of the mss. had been made available to him at St Petersburg through the Council of the London Royal Asiatic Society.²³⁰ In the introduction to his work there is a short discussion of the mss.,²³¹ with comments on their origin, the state of the mss., any lacunae, etc.: Lon. 2927 was a ms. then in possession of the India Office Library in London, today part of the British Library, London. Minayev mentions that it was brought from Nepal by Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894). On the first folio there is some writing in Newari, under which we find written the year 519 NE (1399 CE), as well as the title.²³² The ms. is made from palm-leaf, consists of 52 folia, with folia 25-26 and 38-39 missing. Lon. 13 was kept at the Library of the London Asiatic Society, also today part of the British Library, London. This is also a palm-leaf ms. Minayev refers us to Cowell (1876: 13, #13) for further information on this.²³³ The last ms. employed by Minayev, Unk. M, is given the short form “M” by him. Minayev states that this is a ms. from the collection of the author, presumably referring to himself, and I therefore presume that “M” refers to his own name. Pezzali (1968: 51) suggests that Unk. M is the same as Par. dev. 78, the ms. later used by La Vallée Poussin in his edition of the BCAP. However, Minayev mentions that the ms. contains 24 folia, with 14 lines on a page, and also contains a date, 791 NE (1671 CE),²³⁴ although he states that this should not be understood as the date of the ms.²³⁵ This information contradicts that given by Pezzali for Par. dev. 78, which is said to consist of 56 folia, with seven lines on a page, and with no date given. It can therefore be concluded that we are here dealing with

²²⁸ Kept at the British Library, London; see the list of mss. in the appendix for further information.

²²⁹ The location of this ms. is unknown; it might be in St.Petersburg as it was part of Minayev’s private collection.

²³⁰ Minayev (1889: 154) gives thanks to Dr. R. Rost, Prof. Rhys Davids, and the Council of the London Royal Asiatic Society.

²³¹ I would like to thank Valeria Gazizova (MA student at UiO) for preparing an English translation of this introduction, originally written in Russian.

²³² Minayev (1889: 153): “*samvat 519 mārgaśiraśuddhi*” and “*bodhicaryāvatāra | damma 9.*”

²³³ See the list of mss. in the appendix for details.

²³⁴ Minayev says that the first number is not quite clear, and might be 8, giving us the date 891 NE (1771 CE).

²³⁵ The reason for this is not clear to me.

two separate mss., and that the present whereabouts of Unk. M can not now be ascertained.²³⁶ Concerning alternative readings Minayev states that Lon. 13 and Unk. M coincide.

Prajñākaramatī's (10th Century) BCAP was edited and published in stages by Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1869-1938). The commentary on the 9th chapter of the BCA, separately entitled *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭīka* (BCAṬ), came out in 1898, while an edition containing all surviving material of the BCAP was published between 1901 and 1914. In the introduction to this work La Vallée Poussin describes briefly his sources and the work process: For the BCAP two mss. from the collection of the Government of Bengal at Calcutta were employed: Kol. G. 3829 and Kol. G. 3830.²³⁷ These had been acquired by Mahāmahopādhyāya Hara Prasad Śāstri (1882-1956) in Nepal, and were later catalogued by him.²³⁸ The first, written in a Maithili/Bengali script, contains only the 9th chapter (BCAṬ) and was the basis for La Vallée Poussin's edition of 1898.²³⁹ The second, in a Newari script, contains the whole BCAP (with several large lacunae),²⁴⁰ and, together with the former, this formed the basis for the complete edition of 1901-14. La Vallée Poussin also added the full verses of the BCA into his edition.²⁴¹ For this he based himself on Minayev's edition, as well as two mss. kept at the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris: Par. dev. 78 and 79.²⁴² Both these mss. are written on paper, the prior written in Newari script, the latter in Devanagari script,²⁴³ and both seem to be of a later date. La Vallée Poussin also had some help from a small text entitled *Bodhicaryāvatāra-ṭippanī* (BCAṬIP) which had been brought to his attention by Cecil Bendall (1856-1906). This commentary was never removed from Kathmandu—it was only copied for Bendall—and it will be discussed in detail below as it is among the mss. catalogued by the NGMCP. The *Śtkṣāsamuccaya* (ŚS) was also used extensively,²⁴⁴ as well as the Tibetan translations of the

²³⁶ As Minayev was a professor at the University of St. Petersburg it might be expected that the ms. is still kept there. I have so far not been to get any further in locating it.

²³⁷ Now kept at the Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

²³⁸ Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 49); see list of mss. in the appendix for details on these.

²³⁹ Based on an analysis of the script Hara Prasad Śāstri dates this ms. to the 12th Century CE.

²⁴⁰ This ms. contains the date 198 NE (1078 CE); this is the oldest dated Sanskrit ms. of the BCA.

²⁴¹ Prajñākaramatī only gives a a word or two, followed by *ādi* (etc.), to introduce a verse when commenting upon it.

²⁴² The last is referred to as “Burnouf 98” (“Burn.”) by La Vallée Poussin, due to the fact that the ms. was part of the collection of Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852). Pezzali (1968: 52) refers to it as “Burnouf 90”.

²⁴³ Based on an analysis of the script Filliozat (1941: 63) suggests that Par. dev. 79 is from the 18th-19th Centuries CE.

²⁴⁴ La Vallée Poussin thanks the editor of this (presumably referring to Cecil Bendall) for helping him identify parallel passages.

BCA and BCAP found in Tg. Later editions of the Sanskrit BCA—Śāstri (1955),²⁴⁵ Vaidya (1960),²⁴⁶ Bhaṭṭācārya (1960),²⁴⁷ Divyavajra (1986),²⁴⁸ Dvārikādāsaśāstrī (1988),²⁴⁹ and Tripathi (1989)²⁵⁰—based themselves solely on Minayev (1889) and La Vallée Poussin (1898 and 1901-14), and can not be said to have added anything substantial to the research on the Sanskrit edition of the BCA.

This leaves us with 16 mss. (except for those identified in Nepal), one in Cambridge (Cam. 869), four in Kolkata (Kol. G. 8067, Kol. G. 9979, Kol. G. 9990, and Kol. B. 42), and several more in Kyoto, Tokyo, Patna (/Beijing), and Stony Brook, which were not consulted for any of the previous editions.²⁵¹ The Cambridge ms. is reported to form the ninth section of the *Āśokāvadānamālā*.²⁵² It is written on paper, but is not dated. For the Kolkata mss. I was fortunate enough to be able to view them first hand during a trip to the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, in December 2008: The librarian at the Asiatic Society was able to find all mss. except Kol. G. 3830 and Kol. B. 42. The ms. Kol. G. 3830 has already been mentioned above, as it was employed by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14). The library did not know why the ms. had gone missing, but in Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 49) we learn that “[t]he ms. has been lent to Professor Louis de la Vallée Poussin of Ghent; but owing to the war, the ms. cannot be obtained for the purpose of cataloguing.” Might it be that the ms. is still at the University of Ghent, Belgium? I have not been able to get any further than this in locating it. Concerning the ms. Kol. B. 42, it was only catalogued and commented on as part of the collection of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, by Mitra (1971, 1882: 47-48), and was not in the catalogue of Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917) published 35 years later, indicating that it was perhaps no longer in the collection at that time. Mitra describes this ms. as “old”, and it seems from his description that it does not have any lacunae. Hopefully these two missing mss. will be located and made available in the future.

²⁴⁵ With Hindi translation.

²⁴⁶ This is a new edition of the BCAP based on La Vallée Poussin (1901-14). Vaidya has also added, using Minayev (1889), the verses from the BCA where there are lacunae in BCAP.

²⁴⁷ With Tibetan translation arranged parallel to the Sanskrit verses; the editor does not say from what source the Tibetan translation comes.

²⁴⁸ With Newari translation.

²⁴⁹ With Hindi translation.

²⁵⁰ With Tibetan translation and Hindi gloss.

²⁵¹ The mss. in the last four locations have not been available to me, and there is little information to gather from the available catalogues. I therefore postpone a discussion of them until more information has been gathered.

²⁵² Bendall (1883: 6-7); on the *Āśokāvadānamālā* see Nakamura (1987: 137), Strong (1989) and Mitra (1971, 1882); the *Āśokāvadānamālā* is a vast compendium of Buddhist legends including many about Aśoka; in a footnote Pezzali (1967: 52) mentions that copies of this ms. are available in the India Office, Paris, and Calcutta.

Out of the four mss. that I was able to investigate at the Asiatic Society the ms. Kol. G. 3829, containing the BCAT, was also mentioned above in connection with La Vallée Poussin (1901-14) and will not be discussed further here. Kol. G. 8067 is an incomplete edition of the BCA with two out of 66 folia missing. It was copied in 1492 VE (1436 CE) and is written in a Bengali script. As it fortunately contains a date for when it was copied it was of great help to Banerji (1919) and Dimitrov (2002) who employed it in studies of the history and dating of Bengali scripts. As Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 21) suggests, the ms. is “clear evidence of the prevalence of Buddhism in Bengal in the 15th Century.” The destruction of Nālandā University by the Muslim conqueror Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1193 has traditionally been seen as the final downfall of Buddhism in India,²⁵³ but, as this ms. illustrates, Buddhism was still present in Bengal at least as late as 1436 CE. The two final mss. are perhaps also the most interesting. Kol. G. 9979 is described in Hara Prasad Śāstri as containing four folia, although I found it to contain five when I investigated it. Two folia contain the end of chapter 8 and the beginning of chapter 9 of the BCA, one of them containing the colophon to the 8th chapter. These folia can not be among those missing in Kol. G. 8067, as the leaves and script is clearly different here. I have not been able to compare it to other BCA mss. The other folia contain commentaries. Concerning the first two, one is marked on the left hand side with the folio number “*aṣa 9*” (=127), and on the other can be found the colophon to the 8th chapter of the BCAP. The second half of the 8th chapter is missing in La Vallée Poussin (1901-14). He mentions that the beginning of chapter 9 in his edition is taken from Kol. G. 3829, as the folia containing it, up until folio number 129, are missing in Kol. G. 3830.²⁵⁴ It therefore seems plausible that the two folia of Kol. G. 9979, being folia number 127 and (probably) 128 are two of those missing before folio number 129 of Kol. G. 3830. As Kol. G. 3830 has gone missing this can not at present be confirmed. As, due to time constraints, I was not able to perform more than a superficial reading of these folia, and as La Vallée Poussin does not say which folio number is the last one containing chapter eight in the missing G 3830, it can also not at the moment be determined whether these two would complete chapter eight, or whether even more are missing. A study of these two folia on their own would be of great value as they would fill in at least one of the several lacunae in the BCAP that was published by La Vallée Poussin. The fifth folio is written in a different hand, and contains text only on one

²⁵³ Scott (1995).

²⁵⁴ La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: 342).

side. It seems to contain the BCAP to verses 9.63-64.²⁵⁵ This section is not missing in La Vallée Poussin (1901-14), and is therefore of less interest.

The final ms., Kol. G. 9990, contains the life story of Śāntideva. It was quoted in full by Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 51-53) and Pezzali (1968: 27-32), and is the only source we have for this account in Sanskrit.²⁵⁶ It was suggested by Jong (1975: 164)²⁵⁷ that this account is the same as that found in the beginning of Vibhūticandra's (12th-13th Century) commentary on the BCA, *Bodhicaryāvatāratātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanī* (BCATPVD), now available only in Tibetan translation.²⁵⁸ A comparison of the first few paragraphs has confirmed this. If the text in this ms. was authored by Vibhūticandra, as this comparison seems to suggest, it would mean that this is the earliest source we have for the life story of Śāntideva.

Manuscripts in the catalogue of the NGMCP

Over 20000 mss.²⁵⁹ have been microfilmed and catalogued by the NGMCP since its inception. These range from palm-leaf mss. up to a millennium old to paper mss. in book-form produced in the first half of the 20th Century.²⁶⁰ They are written in Sanskrit, Newari, Nepali, Tibetan, Bengali, Singhalese, Gujarati, Hindi, Persian, Kirati, Maithili, Pali, Marathi, Urdu, and Prakrit. The bulk of the mss. are on religious topics, mostly Hindu and Buddhist, but mss. on other topics related to politics, law, poetry, love-making, etc., are also represented. With this impressive abundance of material available it is no wonder that most of it has not been adequately studied as of yet. The catalogue of the NGMCP is primarily based on preliminary investigations of the mss. performed at the time of filming. Some of these observations seem to some extent to have been fairly superficial, based on a first impression of the ms., and all available data have not been included as will be illustrated by the mss. of the BCA. The catalogue lists 41 mss. related to the BCA.²⁶¹ Of these 37 are titled “Bodhicaryāvatāra”, while there are two “Bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣā”, one “Bodhicaryāvatārānuśaṃsāvadāna”, and one

²⁵⁵ Based on what Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: 51) says.

²⁵⁶ The other three sources are in Tibetan, written by Bu ston (1290-1364), Tāranātha (1575-1608), and Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-77?); see earlier section on Śāntideva's life for more on these.

²⁵⁷ Before him the same, as Jong himself states, was also suggested by Ejima Yasunari, in “Nyūbodaigyōron no chūshaku bunken ni tsuite”, in *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū*, XIV (1966), p. 646.

²⁵⁸ Tg sha 192b6-285a7 (D No. 3880).

²⁵⁹ Excluding the bulk of Tibetan mss.

²⁶⁰ See the catalogue of the NGMCP, <http://134.100.72.204:3000/> (extracted from the internet 1st of December 2008).

²⁶¹ The catalogue also lists 34 mss. containing Tibetan translations of the BCA or commentaries to it.

“Bodhicaryāvatāra(parikathā)”. They are either written in Sanskrit, Newari, or a combination thereof, and the scripts used are described as Newari, Devanagari, and, in one case, Maithili. The oldest dated specimen is a palm-leaf ms. from 1180 CE (300 NE), while the most recent one is a paper ms. copied in 1943 CE (2000 VE). As a result of my investigation some of these data have been revised. I have not been able to gain access to all the BCA mss. listed in the NGMCP, and this revision has therefore not been complete. All the revisions that have been made can be found in the appendix, where all mss. related to the BCA known to me have been listed according to where they are kept.

18 mss. have through this examination been positively identified as containing Sanskrit editions of the BCA.²⁶² Of these five are palm-leaf mss., while the rest are written on paper. I will follow the general supposition that the palm-leaf mss. can be expected to be the older of the two. In addition to this there is one palm-leaf ms. catalogued as “Bodhicaryā[vatāra]”, but which I have not been able to positively identify as such.²⁶³ Three mss., catalogued as “Bodhicaryāvatāra”, have been identified as containing Sanskrit commentaries, two of which are mss. containing the BCAP. The third, the *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭippāni* (NGMCP B 23/4), was mentioned in passing by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14) in his introduction to the BCAP, but has not received any further attention.²⁶⁴ As this is the only other commentary, in addition to the BCAP, still available in its original Sanskrit,²⁶⁵ some extra attention have been allotted it in this discussion. Still, these will only be preliminary observations, and a separate study dedicated solely to this ms. is certainly a desideratum. In addition to this there are two extensive commentaries entitled “Bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣā” written in Sanskrit/Newari. This author does not have the required knowledge of the Newari language necessary to enter into a detailed study of these. Still, some general comments on these mss. will be made, as well as an attempt to relate them to Newari literature in general. This leaves 14 mss. catalogued as Sanskrit editions of the BCA and three catalogued as Newari translations of the same. These were not prioritized, as I concluded, based on information gathered from the catalogue, that

²⁶² The catalogue lists an additional 13 Sanskrit BCA, but I have not been able to investigate these.

²⁶³ This is catalogued as NGMCP A 1389/22. The poor quality of the film as well as a difficult script has made it difficult for me to identify this ms. New digital photographs of this has been ordered, but due to several reasons beyond my control this is taking some time. I therefore hope to be able to identify this ms. for a future study.

²⁶⁴ As will be suggested this commentary bears some resemblance to the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatārapañjikā* by Vairocanarakṣita (10th Century), Tg sha 95b7-159a3.

²⁶⁵ Not counting the BCATPVD, of which only the introduction containing the life story of Śāntideva has been preserved; see discussion above.

they were of later date. I do not suggest that these are not of interest, as they will be valuable in gaining an even more complete picture of the history of the BCA. A future investigation of them would certainly be desirable.

The Sanskrit BCA in Nepal²⁶⁶

Of the five palm-leaf mss. investigated only one, NGMCP C 14/2, is dated. The year 300 NE (1180 CE) is stated as the year that it was copied, which would make it over 200 years older than the oldest of the BCA mss. employed for the previous editions.²⁶⁷ The photos on the microfilm I have investigated are blurred, and several folia are impossible to read. From what I have been able to decipher the ms. seems to be complete and the folia arranged in order. The script is Bhujimol, a Brahmi script characterized by the loops at the head of the letters.²⁶⁸ Bhujimol was developed from the Gupta script, and is the most ancient form of the Newari script that was used predominantly in the Kathmandu valley. The mss. NGMCP B 23/5 and E 1518/5 are also written in a similar variety of Bhujimol, and might be from the same general time period. The former consists of seven disordered folia, most of them damaged on the right hand side so that we can no longer see the folia numbering. The first folio starts with the homage “*namo mañjunāthāya*”,²⁶⁹ after which follow the first few verses. Curiously, on the last line of the folio are written a long line of letters/scribbling that do not form words, as if the scribe was practicing his handwriting. The next folio starts with verse 2.13, a folio in the middle has verses from chapter ten, and the last folio ends in verses 4.42. The latter ms., NGMCP E 1518/5, consists of 32 folia, numbered from 1 to 38, with folia numbers 2-6, 11, and 39 missing. The ms. is well preserved, and the microfilm is fairly easy to decipher. The last two mss., NGMCP A 1389/23 and C 14/5, are written in the later Prachalit Newari script.²⁷⁰ The former consists of 12 folia, and is also damaged on the right hand side. The photos are dark and difficult to decipher, but I have been able to make out a few verses here and there. The ms. contains only the section from verses 8.15 to 9.67, and all folia seem to be

²⁶⁶ I do not here consider the mss. kept at the Asha archives, as catalogued by Yoshizaki (1991). There are apparently five additional Sanskrit BCA mss. there. See the appendix for more information on these.

²⁶⁷ Lon. 2927 is dated 519 NE (1399 CE), making it the oldest dated mss. of the BCA used for previous editions. The oldest of all the dated mss. is Kol. G. 3830, from 198 NE (1078 CE), containing the BCAT.

²⁶⁸ See Bühler (1977, 1896), Śākya (1973), and Śākya (2002) for script-charts.

²⁶⁹ There is a wide variety of homages in the different manuscripts: “*oṃ namaḥ śrīvajrasatvāya*” (NGMCP A 121/8), “*oṃ namaḥ sarvabuddhabodhisatvebhyah*” (NGMCP A 121/9, B 98/5, E2511/1, and H 380/8), “*oṃ namo ratnatrayāya*” (NGMCP A 915/6 and E 2355/24), “*namas tārāyai*” (NGMCP B 23/4), and “*oṃ namo buddhāya*” (NGMCP E 10/3, E 1256/7, E 1518/5, and H 321/7).

²⁷⁰ At this stage the script had received a more formal looking style, with a straight line on top. Based on this script the formal caligraphic Rañjana (*la ṅdza* in Tibetan) script developed, which is used to write Newari, as well as ornate mantras in Buddhist monasteries of Tibet and beyond.

ordered correctly. NGMCP C 14/5 consists of 41 folia, and is badly damaged. Only pieces are left of several of the folia. The very first folio seems to be a page from another ms. as it is written in Bhujimol script, and the letters are much larger than those on the rest of the ms. The photo of this is however blurred, and I have not been able to decipher much of it. The rest of the ms. is disordered, with the second folio starting with verse 9.6, and the last with verse 1.31.

Of the 13 paper mss. investigated five are dated, the dates ranging from the middle of the 17th to the middle of the 19th Century CE. NGMCP H 380/8 is the oldest, dated 764 NE (1644 CE). It consists of 17 folia, is written in a Prachalit Newari script, and is, except for some minor damage on the very first folio, complete. It is unusual in that it contains 12 lines per page, while the other mss. contain between five and nine lines. The only other ms. of the BCA containing this many lines is Unk. M, the ms. Minayev (1889) used, which has 14 lines per page.²⁷¹ Unk. M is dated 791 NE (1671 CE), and as none of the other mss. considered here, earlier or later, were written with this many lines per page, it could be suggested that it might have been a peculiarity among Newar scribes of the mid 17th Century to arrange the mss. like this. The scribe who copied NGMCP H 380/8 was named Jayamunī Vajrācārya.²⁷² The dates of the other four mss. are quite close: NGMCP B 97/7 (904 NE; 1784 CE), A 121/8 (950 NE; 1830 CE), B 97/9 (950 NE; 1830 CE), and E 2511/1 (959 NE; 1839 CE). All are written in a Prachalit Newari script, two are complete (A 121/8 and E2511/1), while the other two have a few folia missing. Only in NGMCP E 2511/1 is the scribes name given: Ratnānanda Vajrācārya.²⁷³

We are then left with eight undated paper mss. Four of the mss. are written in a Prachalit Newari script (NGMCP B 98/5, E 1256/7, E 2355/24, and H 321/7), one in what seems to be a Devanagari script with Newari influence, while three (NGMCP A 121/9, A 915/6, and B 98/9) are in Devanagari script. Generally, judging from their appearance, the mss. written in the Newari script seem to be the oldest. It might be suggested that the Newari script was the script of choice in the earlier part of Newari Buddhism, while Devanagari, a later import from India, became more influential relatively recently.²⁷⁴ Today, in the Kathmandu valley, it is my

²⁷¹ NGMCP E 10/3 contains 22 lines, but this is a ms. of the 20th Century in book format, not the traditional format with loose leaves, and is therefore not counted.

²⁷² A *vajrācārya* is a Vajrayāna ritual master. The Vajrācārya are the highest ranking of the two Buddhist castes of Newari Buddhism today, the other being Śākya.

²⁷³ See the appendix for more details on these mss.

²⁷⁴ Devanagari was more common in North-Western India, but gradually gained ground further east.

impression that it is Devanagari that dominates in most people's daily lives, while the Newari script is reserved more for the specialist. NGMCP B 98/5 is the only one of the paper mss. containing a string hole, a survival from format of the earlier palm-leaf mss. It also has virtually the exact same size as NGMCP H 380/8. These two observations could indicate that it is among the earliest of our paper mss., and we could suggest a date close to the mid 17th Century. The other three Newari script mss. (NGMCP E 1256/7, E 2355/24, H 321/7) seem closer in appearance to those dating from the late 18th to the early 19th Century.²⁷⁵ NGMCP E 1484/13 seems to be written in a Devanagari script, but the vowel marker *e* and the consonant *bha* are undoubtedly Newari in character. Could this ms. be an illustration of a transition in the 19th Century from using the Prachalit Newari script to the standard Devanagari among the Newaris of the Kathmandu valley? More mss. need to be compared before anything certain can be said on this point. The last three paper mss. are all written in a standard Devanagari script. NGMCP A 121/9 appears old and worn, but the format resembles the other mss. dated to the 19th Century. This seems to be true also for the better preserved NGMCP A 915/6. The final ms., NGMCP B 98/9, is a curious case. It seems to be the newest of all mss. investigated, but I will not attempt to provide a more accurate date than that. In addition to the text of the BCA there seems to be comments added here and there. It could be a commentary, but does not seem to be following the regular format of commenting on the text verse by verse. I have not been able to go into a more detailed study of the text, and my best guess so far is that it is the BCA, with some introductory comments to place the text in context.²⁷⁶

A comparison

As a first step towards compiling a new edition of the BCA based on the mss. in Nepal it might be useful to take a few verses and compare the readings of them retained in the different mss. Through this we will be able to move towards an understanding of how they relate with the mss. used for previous editions, as well as begin to see the outlines of how the different mss. of the BCA available to us relate to each other. In other words, based on whether they contain the same correct/incorrect readings, we will be able to say whether some particular mss. may have been copies of other particular earlier mss. For this purpose I have chosen to look at verses 1.2 and 9.19b-20. The reason for choosing these verses is that there

²⁷⁵ For more details see the appendix.

²⁷⁶ Hara Prasad Śāstri (1913: 52) mentions that he has read some of this ms. while on a trip to Nepal, and explains that the prologue and epilogue make the BCA a dialogue between Aśoka and his teacher Upagupta. This observation is quite interesting and might explain why the BCA is included in the *Aśokāvadāna* in the ms. Cam. 869.

already exist various readings, most importantly between Minayev (1889) and La Vallée Poussin (1901-14). It is the aim of this comparison then to decide on which reading seems to be the most plausible.

In Minayev (1889: 155) the verse 1.2 is reproduced like this:

na hi kiñcid apūrvam atra vācyaṃ na ca saṃgranthanakaśālaṃ mamāsti |
*ata eva na me parārthacintā svamano bhāvayituṃ kṛtaṃ mayedam ||*²⁷⁷

Śāntideva is here practicing humility towards the task at hand, a traditional way of starting a literary work in Buddhism. On the contrary to what is stated in the verse, Śāntideva was clearly a literary expert and the work was most certainly intended to benefit other beings, as that is what the Bodhisattva's path is all about. But this need not concern us here. What is of interest are the phrases *bhāvayituṃ* and *mayedam*. La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: 7) instead gives the phrases *vāsayituṃ* ("to perfume") and *mamedam* for these two, and it is this reading that has become the standard for later editions.²⁷⁸ La Vallée Poussin sites the ŚS as the source for this reading, and comments that neither of the two mss. he employed, Par. dev. 78 and 79, read it like this. The source for this reading seems also to have partially been the BCAP. The ms. La Vallée Poussin used for his BCAP, Kol. G. 3829, is, as I mentioned above, not available to me. The section concerning this verse is also not preserved in the two mss. containing the BCAP available through the NGMCP, A 134/5 and A 915/7-916/1. We can therefore for now rely only on La Vallée Poussin's own edition for commentarial assistance. In the commentary, as handed to us by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: 8), we are as can be expected given the reading *vāsayituṃ*. One argument for this reading, apart from the ŚS and Prajñākaramatī's comment, might be that the word *bhāvayituṃ* appears again in the very next verse. In such a richly ornate language as Sanskrit it could be considered poor literary style to repeat a term in this way. Now, concerning the other phrase we find no help in the BCAP, as even La Vallée Poussin himself reiterates the commentary as saying *mayedam*. The reading *mamedam* then is taken solely from the ŚS, while none of the mss. used by La Vallée Poussin or Minayev support it.²⁷⁹ We turn then to the mss. from Nepal for assistance. All the mss. that have preserved the verse, NGMCP E 1518/5, A 121/8, B 98/5, E 1256/7, E 2355/24, E 2511/1,

²⁷⁷ "There is nothing here that has not been said before, nor have I any skill in composition. Therefore, I have made this not with the intent of other's benefit, but in order to develop my own mind."

²⁷⁸ See for instance Vaidya (1960: 3), Bhaṭṭācārya (1960: 1); with *vāsayituṃ* (to perfume), the phrase would translate "..., but in order to perfume my own mind."

²⁷⁹ From a grammatical point of view it does seem more likely to have *mayedam*.

H 321/7, H 380/8, A 121/9, and A 915/6, give the phrases as *bhāvayitum* and *mayedam*,²⁸⁰ in support of Minayev’s reading. There is also no support for La Vallée Poussin’s reading in neither the Tibetan nor Chinese translations, where we find *bsgom phyir* and 觀察 (= *bhāvayitum*), with no trace of any perfume, and *ngas ’di* (= *mayedam*).²⁸¹ Based on this material it can therefore be concluded that Minayev’s earlier reading seems to be correct. We have so far not learnt anything about the relationships between the mss.

Concerning verses 9.19b-20 there is a more considerable difference between Minayev and La Vallée Poussin.²⁸² Minayev (1889: 209) has followed mss. that contain an extra verse here, an anomaly which at first glance, as has been noted by for instance Crosby (1996: 110), seems to be due to a scribal error where the last verse has been to some extent repeated. The verses are reproduced by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: 394-5), without this error, in the following way:

na hi sphaṭikavan nīlaṃ nīlatve ’nyam apekṣate ||
tathā kiṃcit parāpekṣam anapekṣaṃ ca dṛśyate |
*anīlatve na tan nīlaṃ kuryād ātmānam ātmanā ||*²⁸³

The meaning of these verses will be discussed in some detail, as they are important to in order to understand the different versions that have appeared. The context is Śāntideva’s refutation of the views of the Vijñānavādin.²⁸⁴ Śāntideva’s fictional Vijñānavādin has started in verse 9.15b by complaining that if it is like the Mādhyamika Śāntideva has said, that even the deceptive cognition (*saṃvṛti*) does not exist, how then is the illusion perceived?²⁸⁵ Śāntideva

²⁸⁰ Concerning NGMCP A 915/6 I have not been able to positively identify the first consonant of the word, which is strangely shaped, as *bh*. The rest of the word reads *āvayitum*, which would still support this reading, and not *vāsayitum*. NGMCP H 380/8 does not contain the second phrase as the ms. is damaged.

²⁸¹ Tg la 1b3-4: | *sñon chad ma byuñ ba yañ ’dir brjod med* | | *sdeb sbyor mkhas pa ’an bdag la yod min te* | | *de phyir gzan don bsam pa bdag la med* | | *rañ gi yid la bsgom phyir nas ’di brtsams* |; T 1662 543c27-28: 此說無有未曾有亦非自我而獨專我無自他如是時乃自思惟觀察作。The Chinese does not give any conclusive evidence for *mayedam*. However, the 我 in the subject-position could indicate the instrumental *mayā*.

²⁸² As Minayev had one extra verse here, and as La Vallée Poussin followed his numbering of the verses, all the verses after this are numbered one higher than they should. In this paper I follow a numbering scheme where the extra verse by Minayev is not taken into account.

²⁸³ “[Opponent:] A blue [gem] does certainly not, as quartz does, depend on another object for its blueness. Therefore, for their appearance, some things depend on others while some do not. [Reply:] Without blueness it can not make itself blue by itself.”; Tg la 31b3-4: | *śel bzin sñon po sñō ñid la* | | *gzan la ltos pa yod ma yin* | | *de bzin ’ga’ zig gzan la ni* | | *ltos dañ ltos med pa yañ mthoñ* | | *sñō ñid min la sñon par de* | | *bdag gis bdag ñid byas pa med* |; T 1662 557b3-5: 又若水精珠體本唯清澈因青而有青影現隨衆色非青而現青如心。

²⁸⁴ A proponent of the philosophical school often referred to as Yogacāra or Cittamātra, a school that very generally stated emphasizes the role of the mind in the way we experience the world.

²⁸⁵ For the Vijñānavādin the mind, that experiences the external illusions, must at least have some kind of existence, even though the external objects are non-existent. The Mādhyamika is balancing along a thin line of

replies that this critique is unwarranted since the Vijñānavādin agrees that the external illusion is non-existent, and why do we then need anything to perceive it? To this the Vijñānavādin answers that it exists, but only as an expression of the mind. Śāntideva replies by pointing out that if the mind is this very same apparently external illusion, then the subject and object are the same singular thing, and what then perceives what? He points out that the Buddha himself has said that mind cannot perceive mind, in the same way that the blade of a sword cannot cut itself.²⁸⁶ To this the Vijñānavādin then replies by giving two examples to illustrate how this is still possible through reflective awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), that of a lamp and of gems, the last being the one the verses above are concerned with. A lamp illuminates its surroundings, and illuminates itself as well. In the same way the mind can perceive its surroundings, and at the same time perceive itself. This example is not appropriate, replies Śāntideva, since there is no darkness in a lamp that needs to be illuminated, and so it can not illuminate itself. It is like a gem then, suggests the Vijñānavādin. There are clear crystals (*sphaṭikavan*) that can take the colour of blue if something blue is placed closed by, and there are gems that are naturally blue by themselves (*nīlaṃ*), such as lapis lazuli. Just as there are in this case two types of gems, one dependent on other objects for its appearance (*parāpekṣam*), and another that is independent (*anapekṣam*) of these, there are also two types of cognitions, one dependent upon objects, and one independent, which is focussed inwards, perceiving awareness only. The last verse line above is Śāntideva's reply to this. He points out that something that is not blue (*anīlatve*) cannot make itself blue by itself, since all phenomena depend on causes and conditions. This would also apply to a blue gem, such as lapis lazuli. It is, as all other things, dependent on causes and conditions, and could not have made itself blue by itself. This is therefore not an example that can be employed to illustrate what the Vijñānavādin wishes to illustrate here, a reflective awareness that is independent of external objects.

With this understanding we can begin to look at the other versions available, and Minayev's is not the only one. In the mss. of the BCATib₁ recovered from Dūnhuáng we find what must be

notions here, and for him, even though phenomena does not have any (true) existence, that does not mean that phenomena do not work on a conventional level. There are disagreements, especially within Tibetan Buddhism, concerning the terms used to argue for this view. I am, as general rule, here following the explanations given in Gyatso (1994b).

²⁸⁶ This quote is taken from the *Cūḍāmanisūtra*.

an earlier version of the verses.²⁸⁷ As has been discussed above it seems that there have been additions made in the later recension of the BCA in order to clarify points, with mixed results. The verses 9.19b-20 seems then to be an example of such an addition, for in the BCATib₁ we are given the following short verse:

| *sngon po dag ni shel lta bur* | | *sngon po 'i rgyu la myi ltos ste* |
 | *sngon po nyid du 'dug pa gang* | | *rang la rang go*²⁸⁸ *sngon por byed* ||²⁸⁹

We are here faced with a puzzle. The first line seems straightforward, and is an accurate translation of what has been preserved in La Vallée Poussin's version. The second line, however, only partially resembles the third line of what has been preserved in the Sanskrit edition. And, finally, there is no trace at all of the second line of La Vallée Poussin's edition. This last point could perhaps be explained as an addition, as it only clarifies the example of the gem just mentioned, and does not really add anything of importance. The last line, however, proves to be more difficult to explain. It seems to be saying, using roughly the same words, the exact opposite of the reply of Śāntideva above: "How is it blue? It makes itself blue by itself." Fortunately a commentary to this early edition, the BCAV, has been preserved in the Tg. This commentary seems to explain the verse as a whole as the argument made by the Vijñānavādin.²⁹⁰ There is no reply made.

Finally, we look at the verses as presented by Minayev (1889: 209):

na hi sphaṭikavan nīlaṃ nīlatve 'nyam apekṣate ||
tadā kiṃcit parāpekṣam anapekṣam ca drśyate |
anīlatvena tan nīlaṃ nīlahetur yathekṣyate ||
nīlam eva hi ko nīlaṃ kuryād ātmānam ātmanā |

²⁸⁷ See the above discussions on India and Tibet for more details on this recension.

²⁸⁸ Lon. Tib J 629 ka 32a2; BCAV [Saito (1993: 41)] reads *gis*.

²⁸⁹ Saito (2000: 51); "A blue [gem] does not, like quartz does, depend on a cause blue. How is it blue? It makes itself blue by itself."

²⁹⁰ Saito (1993: 40-41): *sngon po dag ni mthun pa 'i dpe ste* | *de bzhin du vai-du-rya bzhin no* || *shel lta bu zhes bya ba ni sngon po de nyid kyi mi mthun pa 'i dpe ste* | *ji ltar shel ni rang bzhin gyis sngon po ma yin pa 'i phyir* | *sngon po ma yin pa 'i rkyen vai-du-rya la sogs pa la ltos pa yin la* | *vai-du-rya sngon po nyid ni sngon po 'i rgyu la mi ltos te* | *ci 'i phyir zhe na* | *dang po nas sngon po nyid du 'dug pa yin pa 'i phyir de lta bu 'i vai-du-rya sngon po de rang la rang gis sngon por byed de* || *sngon por bya mi dgos pa 'i phyir rang la sngon bzhin no zhes bya ba 'i tha tshigs go* || ("The example of the blue [gem] refers to for instance lapis lazuli (*vaidūrya*). "Like quartz does," refers to the example of the opposite of something that is blue in itself, as the quartz may not be blue by nature, because being conditioned for not [appearing as] blue it is dependent on a lapis lazuli, or other such [gems], while a lapis lazuli is blue by essence and is not dependent on a cause for appearing as blue. Why is that? It is because it exists as having the nature of being blue in the first place. In this way the blue lapis lazuli is made blue by itself. Because it does not need to be made blue it has its own blue appearance. That explains that.")

anīlatvena tan nīlaṃ kuryād ātmānam ātmanā ||²⁹¹

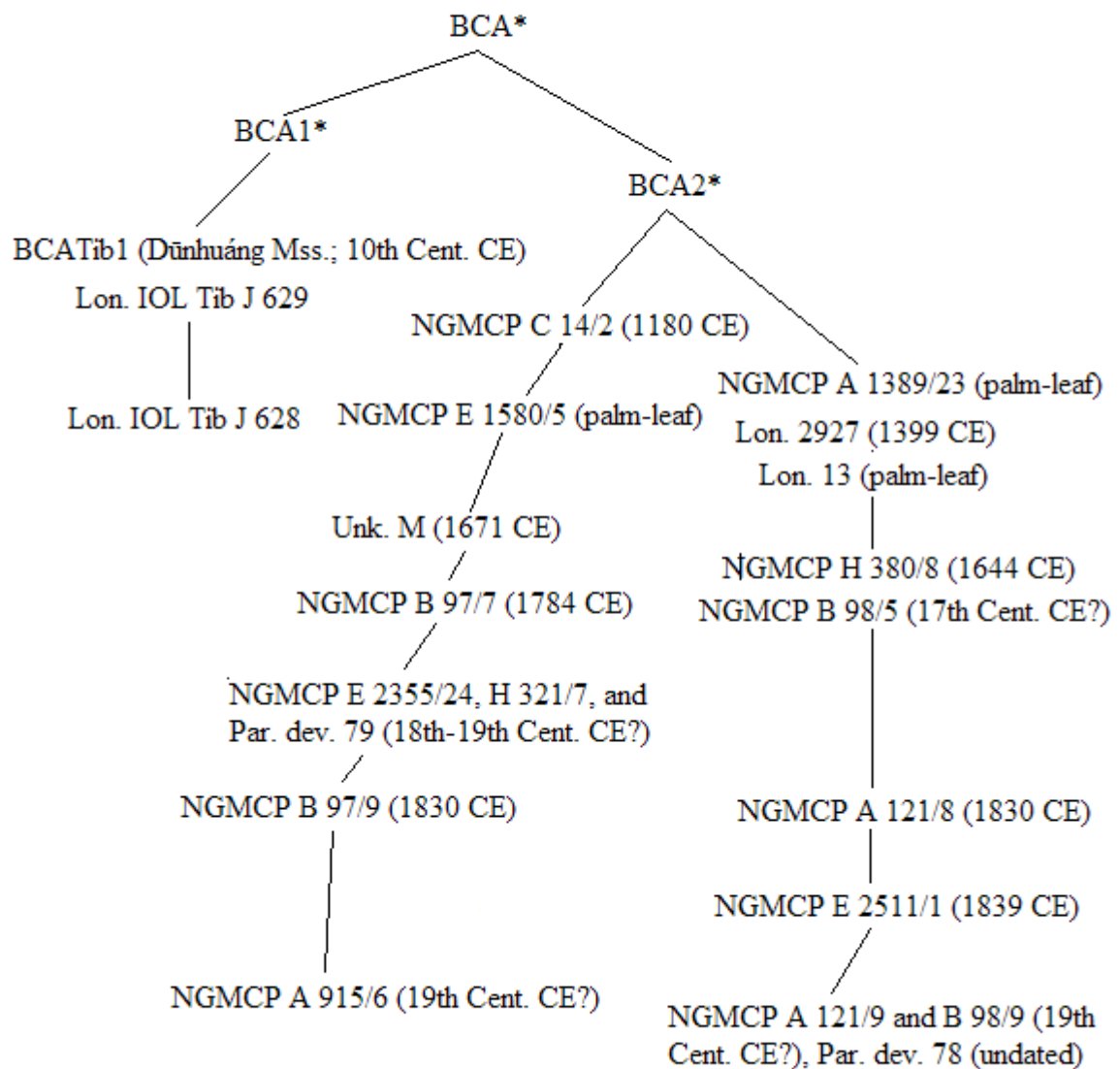
As we can see the third and fourth line here are additions when compared to La Vallée Poussin's edition. When compared to the Dūnhuáng ms., however, it seems that the third and fifth line are what has been added, since line four seems to be saying the exact same thing as the second line does there. Could it be that the two later recensions, the ones preserved by Minayev (1889) and La Vallée Poussin (1901-14), were two different attempts at filling in what is left unsaid by Śāntideva in BCA₁? I will not attempt to go any further in resolving this issue here, as a more detailed discussion could sidetrack us completely from the matter at hand. What is of more interest to us in this chapter is what can effectively be said concerning the relationships between the mss. of the NGMCP based on the difference that has now been outlined.

What we can conclude from the foregoing discussion is that there must have been at least three stages in the development of the Sanskrit BCA, at least when it comes to verses 9.19b-20. The first stage is documented in the mss. recovered at Dūnhuáng. This stage is only available to us in Tibetan translation, as no Sanskrit ms. that I know of has been preserved of this earliest version of the BCA. The second and third stage, however, are amply documented. The second stage, as recorded in La Vallée Poussin (1901-14), is also what has been preserved in both the Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian canonical translations. In addition to this I have positively identified seven mss. that contain this version: NGMCP A 915/6, B 97/7, B 97/9, C 14/2, E 1518/5, E 2355/24, and H 321/7. Also, judging from observations La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: 395) made in a footnote to these verses, Par. dev. 79 is also among this group. The third stage, as recorded in Minayev (1889), is preserved in seven of the mss.: NGMCP A 1389/23, A 121/8, B 98/5, E 2511/1, H 380/8, A 121/9, and B 98/9. In addition, judging from the same footnote by La Vallée Poussin, Par. Dev. 78 is also among these, as well as Lon. 2927 and Lon. 13, judging from a footnote by Minayev (1889: 209). As all the mss. of the BCA have been found in Nepal, we will here follow the assumption that they are relatives in the sense that the earlier are the originals from which the later have been copied.

²⁹¹ Due to the differences shown here this verse has led to considerable confusion in translations. In Gyatso (1994b: 27-28) for instance B. Alan Wallace presents the following incomprehensive translation, in an attempt to make Minayev's five-line version fit the Tibetan three-line version: "A blue [thing] does not require another [blue thing] for its blueness, as does a clear crystal. So the mind is seen sometimes to depend on another, sometimes not. Such blue [-ness of a blue thing] is not regarded as the cause of [its own] blueness, as in the case of the non-blueness [of a crystal, where there is causation]. What blue would make just blue, itself [made] by itself?"

Based on this analysis of verses 9.19b-20 we are then able to construct a first tentative line of descent for these mss., illustrating the three major versions of these verses that have come down to us (see figure below). This is of course only a first step in the understanding of these relationships, and further studies of also other verses will hopefully make this chart more sophisticated.

Tentative chart of relationships between Mss. based on verses 9.19b-20



Prospects for a new edition of the BCA

Considering the large amount of ms. material now available it seems in high time for the job of editing a more accurate version of the Sanskrit BCA to be undertaken. Based on the invaluable work already done by Minayev (1889) and La Vallée Poussin (1898, 1901-14) this will certainly prove to be a less painful task than otherwise expected.²⁹² Minayev only had three mss. at his disposal, while La Vallée Poussin could support himself on two more. Now that 18 more mss. have here received their first long overdue attention, and the appendix at the end of this thesis lists 34 additional ones,²⁹³ a new edition of the BCA will be based on a much firmer foundation than what was possible earlier. Unfortunately no Sanskrit edition of the earlier version of the BCA (that which formed the basis for BCATib₁) has been found. Still, a new edition should include considerations of this material, as it has to some extent provided proof that the Sanskrit edition of the BCA handed down to us has undergone major revisions and additions through the years. A reconstruction of this earlier edition could prove a fun exercise, but would perhaps not yield much of interest. It is my intention to continue to publish material on the BCA at the newly established web-site *Bibliotheca Polyglotta*²⁹⁴ launched by Professor Jens Braarvig of the University of Oslo. This will probably prove to be the best platform available for such a new edition of the BCA.

Sanskrit commentaries

The BCAP is the only Sanskrit commentary to the BCA to have been published so far. As was mentioned above, La Vallée Poussin (1901-14) based himself on only one (incomplete) ms. of the BCAP (Kol. G. 3830), as well as a ms. of the 9th chapter only (BCAT; Kol G. 3829). An additional two folia of Kol. G. 3830 seem to have been located in Kol. G. 9979, making it possible for us to eventually fill in some earlier presumed lost sections. In addition to this a few additional mss. have fortunately now also been identified in Nepal, two in the NGMCP catalogue (NGMCP A 134/5 and A 915/7-916/1) and two in the Asha archives (Ash. 4148 and 4149). According to the information in Yoshizaki (1991) both the mss. in the Asha archives are modern book copies in Devanagari script. No further information is available concerning the exact contents of these. The two mss. in the NGMCP catalogue are both

²⁹² Some work has also been done on Pat. 196 by Lindtner (1991), but this has not lead to the publication of a new edition.

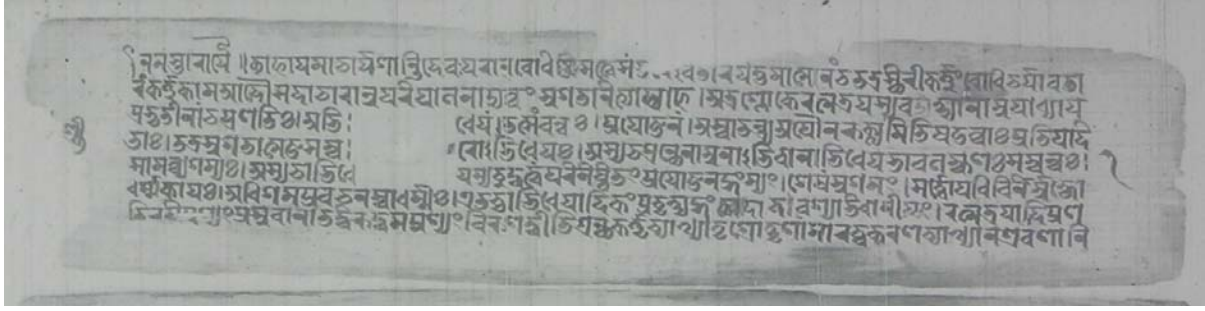
²⁹³ Cam. 869, Kol. G. 8067, B. 42, Kyo. E 260, E 261, NGMCP B 98/8, E 910/10, E 910/11, E 1086/5, E 1099/1, E 1375/2, E 1553/2, E 1700/9, E 1730/16, E 1730/17, E 1838/4, E 3227/17, H 3/3, H 44/5, Ash. 161, 359, 1037(?), 2901, 4188, 4504, Pat. 110, 196, IASW MBB-I-1, MBB-II-231, and Tok. 260-264; there might be some cross-referencing between the NGMCP and Ash. catalogues.

²⁹⁴ <https://husmann.uio.no/polyglotta>.

written in Devanagari, and judging from their appearance on the microfilm photos I would propose (by means of an educated guess) that they are as old as the youngest of the BCA mss. considered above. NGMCP A 915/7-916/1 seems to be the oldest of the two, perhaps copied sometime in the second half of the 19th Century, while A 134/4 was copied sometime during the late 19th to the early 20th Centuries. NGMCP A 915/-916/1 seems to have its folia somewhat mixed up, with folia containing the 9th chapter in the beginning, while folia containing earlier chapters come after that. There are sections missing that are not due to folia having gone missing. The scribe seems to have made this copy from an already incomplete ms., and the sections that are missing coincide with some of those missing from La Vallée Poussin's edition, indicating that perhaps the scribe was using the same ms. (Kol. G. 3830) that La Vallée Poussin would later use for his edition, or at least a copy of the same. NGMCP A 134/5 starts with the commentary on verse 4.45 and continues to the end of the 9th chapter, with some parts missing. The commentary to the first 44 verses of chapter 4 are also missing in La Vallée Poussin, and so it is probably also true for this ms. that it originates from Kol. G. 3830. A more detailed analysis has not been possible so far.

The existence of the *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭippaṇī* (BCAṬIP; NGMCP B 23/4) was, as has been noted above, already mentioned by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14: introduction). It has, however, unfortunately not received any further attention, a curious fact considering the popularity of BCA-studies. The ms. is written on palm-leaf, consists of 27 folia, and is written in a Prachalit Newari script. If I had to guess I would suggest a date somewhere in the 13th-14th Centuries. Judging from the first superficial reading of the first folio of the ms. I first came to the conclusion that the text is in fact Vairocanarakṣita's (11th Century CE) *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, which is available in a Tibetan translation.²⁹⁵ There is a striking similarity in the beginning of these two texts. A more detailed reading of the first folio has however uncovered that the differences are too large to be overlooked, so this conclusion is on hold for the moment. I present below a tentative transcription of this first folio of BCAṬIP, and hope to be able to continue with a more detailed study of this ms. in the near future.

²⁹⁵ Tg sha 95b7-159a3.



BCATIP, NGMCP B 23/4, folio 1, verso

Diplomatic transcription (NGMCP B 23/4, folio 1, verso):

Line 1:

na ma stā rā yai || ī hā ya mā cā rya śā nti de va : pa rā nta bo dhi [.] sa tve saṃ [bha re 'va tā]
 ra y[i] tu mā tmā naṃ ca ta tra sthī rī ka rttuṃ bo dhi ca ryā va tā

Line 2:

raṃ ka rttu kā ma ā dau sa dā cā rā nu pa ri pā la nā ḍya rthaṃ su ga tā ni tyā hyā ha | a tra ślo
 ke ra tna tra ya sya va (dyaṃ) [ndyā] nā mu pā dhyā ya

Line 3:

pra bhṛ tī nāṃ ca pra ṇa tiḥ | a bhi o dhe yaṃ | ta tsaṃ ba ndhaḥ | pra yo ja naṃ | a svā ta ntrya
 a pau na ru ktya mi ti ṣa ḍa rthāḥ pra ti pā di

Line 4:

tāḥ | ta tra su ga tā tma ja sa mva o ro 'bhi dhe yaḥ | a sya ca gra nthe nā mu nā 'bhi dhā nā bhi
 dhe ya bhā va la ska ṇaḥ sa mba ndhaḥ

Line 5:

sā ma rthya ga myaḥ | a sya cā bhi dhe o ya sya bu ddha tvam pa ri ni ṣṭi taṃ pra yo ja na ṅga
 myaṃ | še ṣaṃ su ga maṃ | sa rvvo pa dhi vi ni rmu kto

Line 6:

dha rmma kā yaḥ | a dhi ga ma pra va ca na mcā dha rmmaḥ | e ta ccā bhi dhe yā dhi kaṃ pra
 vṛ ttya ṅga [tvā] dā [.] va śyā bhi dhā nī [ya]ṃ | ra tna tra yā di pra ṇa

Line 7:

[t]i ra [i .] ṇyaṃ pra su vā nā ta ddhi ru ddha ma pra ṇyaṃ vi ru śa ddhī ti gra nthā ka rttṛ vyā
 khyā bhṛ śro bhṛ śā nā ra rtha ka [ra] ṇa vyā khyā na śra va ṇā ni

Edited transcription:

namas tārāyai || thāyam ācāryaśāntidevaḥ parāntabodhisatve saṃbhare ’vatārayitum ātmānaṃ
ca tatra sthīrīkarttuṃ bodhicaryāvatāraṃ karttukāma ādau sadācārānuparipālanādyartham
sugatān ity ādy āha | atra śloke ratnatrayasya vandyānām upādhyāya prabhṛtīnām ca praṇatīḥ |
abhidheyam | tatsaṃbandhaḥ | prayojanam | asvāntarya apaunar uktyam iti ṣaḍarthāḥ
pratipādītāḥ | tatra sugatātmajasamvaro ’bhidheyāḥ | asya ca
granthenāmunā ’bhidhānābhidheyabhāvalakṣaṇaḥ saṃbandhaḥ sāmartyagamyāḥ | asya
cābhidheyasya buddhatvaṃ pariniṣṭitam prayojanaṃ gamyaṃ | śeṣam sugamaṃ |
sarvvopadhivinirmukto dharmmakāyaḥ | adhigam apravacanam cādharmaḥ | etac
cābhidheyādhikam pravṛtṭyaṅga(tvā)d ā[.]vaśyābhidhānīyam | ratnatrayādīpraṇatir a[pi .]nyam
prasuvānā tad dhi ruddham apraṇyam viruśad dhīti granthakartṭṛvyākhyā bhṛśro
bhṛśānārthakaraṇavyākhyā na śravaṇāni²⁹⁶

Manuscripts in Newari²⁹⁷

We must also say something about the few ms. written in the Newari language. These observations will only be superficial, as a sufficient knowledge of this language is sadly lacking in this author. Furthermore, a discussion connecting these mss. with the broader literary and social history of Newari Buddhism took place in a previous chapter, and will not be repeated here. There are three mss. containing a Newari translation of the BCA (NGMCP E 1375/3, E 1709/5, and E 1789/39),²⁹⁸ and two containing Newari commentaries (NGMCP E 10/3 and E 1374/25-1375/1). Concerning the translations of the BCA, they have not been examined for this study, and so I rely only on the information gathered from the NGMCP catalogue for information on these. All three translations are written in Devanagari. Only one

²⁹⁶ ”Homage to Tārā. In this [work] the teacher Śāntideva, in order to enter the prerequisites of the ultimate [practice of the] bodhisatva, to make it firm in himself, intending to compose the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, starts [his work], in order to nourish good conduct, [with the words] “sugatān” etc. In this verse he starts with a salutation to the teachers, those of the three jewels of veneration. Then six points are specified: what is to be presented, its context, the purpose, avoiding personal caprice, avoiding repetition, and what will be uttered. What is to be presented here is the training of the offspring of the Bliss-gone-one, and here, by stringing together in this context the actual work with what one intends to present, the context [in which happens] is fulfilled at the same time. The purpose to be fulfilled through this presentation is the accomplishment of Buddhahood, in a convenient way, to be free from all attachment, to reach the body of dharma, [the level of] no more speech, no more dharma. And this excellent presentation [...] is what I shall present. The salutation to the three jewels and so forth [...].”

²⁹⁷ I do not here consider the mss. kept at the Asha archives, as catalogued by Yoshizaki (1991). There is apparently one additional Newari BCA mss. there. See the appendix for more information on this.

²⁹⁸ The two last ones are reported to be in Sanskrit and Newari, perhaps editions containing parallel texts.

is dated, the ms. NGMCP E 1789/39, copied in 1072 NE (1952 CE). This last one is a printed book, as is NGMCP E 1709/5, while E 1375/2 is in the traditional loose-leaf ms.-format and can therefore be expected to be older than the other two. The two commentaries, both entitled *Bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣā* (BCABh), have been made available to me on microfilm, and so some additional information has therefore been gathered. The two texts are reported to have the same author, Ratna Bahādur Vajrācārya (1893-1955), of whom not much is known,²⁹⁹ but we can then at least conclude that they are probably two editions of the same text. NGMCP E 10/3 is in a modern book format, but seems to be written by hand, while E 1374/25-1375/1 is in the traditional loose leaf ms.-format. The latter is dated to 2000 VE (1943 CE), presumably the date of composition judging from the colophon. The edition in book format has added the full Sanskrit root verses of the BCA, as well as a numbering system, giving a number to each paragraph of the commentary according to which verse it is commenting upon. A further in depth study of these two mss. would be of considerable interest as they could possibly open up an entirely new door in BCA-studies, one found in a Buddhist tradition that has long suffered from a lack of Buddhist scholarly attention.

Conclusion

As Ronald Davidson has pointed out in his influential article also mentioned in the introduction to this work, it has been orthopraxy that has been the central criterion in the development of the Buddhism.³⁰⁰ The Buddhist religion in general has had a relatively liberal view concerning what is to be labelled as the word of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*), and as long as the content is in accord with the basic teachings of *sūtra* and *vinaya*, and is soteriologically effective, the door has not been closed for later innovations. Some have opted for the watertight stamp of approval that is literal *buddhavacana*, and have claimed later innovations to be in fact utterances made by the historical Buddha Śākyamuni. Others again, such as is the case with Śāntideva and the BCA, have not made such attempts, and still later tradition has valued this text arguably as high as the Buddha's own words, if not even higher. In the Tibetan tradition, at least, the text has gained a status and a wide range of uses that is perhaps unchallenged by any other authentic or claimed *sūtras* of the Buddha. It is in many

²⁹⁹ See chapter on Nepal.

³⁰⁰ Davidson (1990: 316).

ways quite extraordinary that a single composition by a relatively anonymous monk who lived in Northern India in the 7th Century, well over a millennium after the Buddha is said to have passed away, has been so widely distributed and read as this thesis has illustrated.

Throughout this presentation we have encountered the BCA in a range of different environments, and in wide variety of linguistic incarnations. It is a text that has truly lived up to the Buddha's admonition that his teachings should not set in some formal language, but should be rendered into all the different dialects (and languages) so that anyone can have access to his teachings.³⁰¹ In India we saw that it was clearly a very popular text, judging from the amount of commentaries that was written on it, and the geographical areas its popularity covered. The abundance of manuscripts uncovered in Nepal containing the text itself is another testament to its status, as is the fact that Newari Buddhists, who do not place very much emphasis on scholarly learning, have even seen the production of an indigenous commentary on it. In Tibet the BCA gained a status unlike any other place it travelled, and it was at the centre of both Buddhist meditational exercises as well as philosophical controversies throughout the history of Tibetan Buddhism. Even today, with the development of modern Tibetan scholarship, and in spite of the harsh years of repression, the interest in the BCA is blossoming, as we saw an example of from Lhasa. China was perhaps the country where it was least influential, but it was still included in the official Buddhist canon of this country, and therefore revered nonetheless. In Mongolia it was apparently among the very first texts introduced and translated, and even though little is known to date of its precise history in this country, it can still be concluded that it had a considerable impact on the development of Mongolian Buddhism. Today, the BCA has seen its popularity grow to an international level, as several influential scholarly works as well as religious and books on personal development are appearing continuously. A central figure partly responsible for the text's wide appeal is the 14th Dalai Lama, and we have seen one example of the manner in which he works to continue the tradition of the BCA. The BCA will surely continue to be an important work for Buddhism, and can probably today also take its place as a prominent work of world literature without feeling ashamed. Śāntideva would surely have been pleased to know that his text has in fact reached an impressive amount of people, but it was perhaps more than he hoped for when he recited his dedication:

³⁰¹ This famous admonition and its story are reiterated in Davidson (1990: 292).

“Whatever the merit might be that I have acquired through composing this
Introduction to the Conduct of Awakening,
May all beings through this enhance their practice of awakening!”³⁰²

Appendix: List of manuscripts

Cambridge (Cambridge University Library):³⁰³

Cam. 869. BCA. (This is the ninth section of the *Aśokāvadānamālā*; see ms. 1482 of the same catalogue). Sanskrit. Paper. 66 folia. 7 lines. 10¼”×4½”. Modern ordinary Devanagari script. Ten chapters.³⁰⁴

Kolkata (Asiatic Society):³⁰⁵

Kol. G. 3829. BCAT. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 109 folia (Complete). 6 lines. 12”×2”.

Maithili/Bengali script (12th Century CE). Commentary to the 9th Chapter only.³⁰⁶

Kol. G. 3830. BCAP. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. Newari script. The first folio and 26 others missing. 198 NE (1078 CE). Commentary to chapters 1-9.³⁰⁷

Kol. G. 8067. BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 64 folia (folio 60 and 62 missing of a total of 66). 4-5 lines. 12½”×1½”. Bengali script. 1492 VE (1436 CE). 10 chapters.³⁰⁸

Kol. G. 9979. BCA and BCAP. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. Palm-leaf. 5 folia. 20”×2”. Newari script. Two folia contain the end of ch. 8 and beginning of ch. 9 of the BCA. Two folia contain the BCAP, end of chapter 8 beginning of chapter 9. (These last two are probably two of the folia missing in Kol. G. 3830.) One folio contains the BCAP of verses 9.63-64.³⁰⁹

Kol. G. 9990. BCATPVD. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 3 folia. 5 lines. 20”×2”. Newari script (14th Century). This ms. contains a life story of Śāntideva forming the introduction to the

³⁰² Minayev (1889: 221); *bodhicaryāvatāraṃ me yad vicintayataḥ śubham | tena sarvaṃ janāḥ santu bodhicaryā vibhūṣaṇāḥ* ||

³⁰³ Ms. no. according to Bendall (1883).

³⁰⁴ Pezzali (1968: 52-53); Bendall (1883: 6-7).

³⁰⁵ Ms. no. according to Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917), if not stated otherwise.

³⁰⁶ Pezzali (1968: 54-55); Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: p. 49, n. 51). The library could not find this ms. on my visit to Kolkata in December 2008. The catalogue of Hara Prasad Śāstri mentions that it had been lent out to La Vallée Poussin, and had not yet been returned in 1917.

³⁰⁷ Pezzali (1968: 54-55); Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: p. 49, n. 49).

³⁰⁸ Pezzali (1968: 53); Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: p. 21, n. 19).

³⁰⁹ Pezzali (1968: 54); Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917: p. 50, n. 50).

commentary by Vibhūtiçhandra's (c. 1200 CE) by the name

Bodhicaryāvataṛatātparyapañjikāviśeṣadyotanī.³¹⁰

Kol. B. 42 (Old No. 815—New No. B. 42).³¹¹ BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 48 folia. 6 lines. 11"×2½". Newari script. 10 chapters.³¹²

Kyoto (Kyoto University)³¹³

Kyo. E 260 (no. 72). BCA. Sanskrit. 66 folia (complete). 6 lines. 25,7×8,3 cm. 1027 NE (1907 CE). 10 chapters.

Kyo. E 261 (no. 73). BCA. Sanskrit. 60 folia (complete). 6 lines. 27.9×5.8 cm. 10 chapters.

London (British Library):

Lon. 2927 (B.H. Hodgson collection 2).³¹⁴ BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 52 folia (fols. 26-27 and 41 out of 55 missing). 5 lines. 12½"×1¾". Newari (ornamental) script. 519 NE (1399 CE). 10 chapters.³¹⁵

Lon. 13.³¹⁶ BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 47 folia. 5 lines. 12½"×1¾". 10 chapters.³¹⁷

Lon. IOL Tib J 628.³¹⁸ BCATib₁. Tibetan. Paper. 22 folia (incomplete). 8 lines. 48,3×11,5cm. dBu can. 9 chapters.

Lon. IOL Tib J 629.³¹⁹ BCATib₁. Tibetan. Paper. 24 folia (incomplete). 6 lines. 41,5×9cm. dBu can.

Lon. IOL Tib J 630.³²⁰ BCATib₁. Tibetan. Paper. 6 folia. 4-5 lines. 31×7,2cm. dBu can and dBu med. 9th Chapter (pariṇāmanā) only.

Nepal₁ (NGMCP):³²¹

(Examined:)

NGMCP A 121/8 (Hamburg no. 12226; acc. no. 5-185). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 66 folia (complete). 5 lines. 29,5×7,5cm. Prachalit Newari script. 950 NE (1830 CE). 10 chapters.

³¹⁰ Tg sha 192b6-285a7.

³¹¹ Ms. no. according to Mitra (1882).

³¹² Pezzali (1968: 53); Mitra (1882: 47); as this was not again catalogued in Hara Prasad Śāstri (1917) it might be that it is no longer part of the collection in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

³¹³ Ms. no. according to Goshima (1983).

³¹⁴ Ms. no. according to Keith (1935: 1394, n. 7713); referred to as "L₁" by Minayev (1889).

³¹⁵ Pezzali (1968: 50).

³¹⁶ Ms. no. according to Cowell (1876: p. 13, n. 13)

³¹⁷ Pezzali (1968: 51); Cowell (1876: 13); referred to as "L₂" by Minayev (1889).

³¹⁸ Ms. no. according to La Vallée Poussin (1962).

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ms. no. according to the NGMCP catalogue, <http://134.100.72.204:3000/> (extracted from the internet on 1st of December 2008).

- NGMCP A 121/9 (Hamburg no. 12222; acc. no. 3-297). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper (?). 47 folia (complete). 9 lines. 28,5×11,5cm. Devanagari script. 19th Century? 10 chapters.
- NGMCP A 134/5 (Hamburg no. 12227; acc. no. 5-7727). BCAP. Sanskrit. Paper. 129 folia (incomplete). 9 lines. 25×12cm. Devanagari script. 19th-20th Century CE? Chapters 4 (verse 45) to 9 (?).
- NGMCP A 915/6 (=B106/3) (Hamburg no. 12221; acc. no. 5-191). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 39 folia (complete). 7 lines. 36×10cm. Devanagari script. 19th Century CE? 10 chapters.
- NGMCP A 915/7-916/1 (Hamburg no. 12232; acc. no. 3-723). BCAP. Sanskrit. Paper. 304 folia (incomplete; 2-152, 172-204, 207-325). 9 lines. 25,5×12cm. Devanagari script. 19th Century CE? 9 chapters.
- NGMCP A 1389/22 (Hamburg no. 91875; acc. no. 6-3313). BCA?. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 19 folia (incomplete). 4 lines. 32×4,2cm. Bengali script. (Needs further study.)
- NGMCP A 1389/23 (Hamburg no. 91876; acc. no. 6-3311). BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 12 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 25×5cm. Prachalit Newari script. Verses 8.15-9.68.
- NGMCP B 23/4 (Hamburg no. 12208; acc. no. 1-772). BCATIP. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 27 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 25,5×5,5cm. 13th-14th Century CE? Prachalit Newari script.
- NGMCP B 23/5 (Hamburg no. 12207; acc. no. 1-772). BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 7 folia (incomplete). 6-7 lines. 25,5×5,5cm. Bhujimol Newari script. Contains verses from chapters 1-2 and 10.³²²
- NGMCP B 97/7 (Hamburg no. 12224; acc. no. 4-1033). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 54 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 21×7cm. Prachalit Newari script. 904(?) NE (1784 CE). Starts from verse 1.5b.
- NGMCP B 97/9 (Hamburg no. 12228; acc. no. 5-7954). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 46 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 29×9,5cm. Prachalit Newari script. 950 NE (1830 CE). Verses 2.25-10.40.
- NGMCP B 98/5 (Hamburg no. 12225; acc. no. 3-91). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 32 folia (complete). 8 lines. 36,5×10cm. Newari script. 17th Century CE? 10 chapters.
- NGMCP B 98/9 (Hamburg no. 12240; acc. no. 3-663). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 47 folia. 8 lines. 32×12cm. Devanagari script. 19th Century CE? (Title: Bodhicaryāvatārānuśaṃsāvadāna; seems to contain some commentary.)

³²² This might be the manuscript mentioned by Hara Prasad Śāstri (1905: 21) to belong to the Durbar Library, Nepal, as this also contains seven folia.

- NGMCP C 14/2 (Hamburg no. 12209; acc. no. 9-124). BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 71 folia (complete). 6 lines. 28,5×5,8cm. Bhujimol Newari script. 300 NE (1180 CE). 10 chapters.
- NGMCP C 14/5 (Hamburg no. 12210; acc. no. 9-127). BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 41 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 23×4,3cm. Prachalit Newari script. Starts from verse 9.6.
- NGMCP E 10/3 (Hamburg no. 12239). BCABh. Sanskrit/Newari. Paper (book). 470 pages. 22 lines. 22,8×15,2cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1256/7 (Hamburg no. 12213). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 26 folia (incomplete). 6 lines. 23×9,1cm. Prachalit Newari script. 18th-19th Century CE?
- NGMCP E 1374/25-1375/1 (Hamburg no. 12238). BCABh. Sanskrit/Newari. Paper. 158 folia. 6 lines. 30,2×8,1cm. Devanagari script. 2000 VE = 1943 CE. (Title: *bodhicaryāvatārabhāṣāyāṃ dhyānapāramitāṣṭamaḥ paricchedaṃ.*)
- NGMCP E 1484/13 (Hamburg no. 12216). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 9 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 21,9×9,5cm. Devanagari/Newari script. 19th Century CE? Verses 1.5-4.9.
- NGMCP E 1518/5 (Hamburg no. 12211). BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 32 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 31×5,5cm. Bhujimol Newari script.
- NGMCP E 2355/24 (Hamburg no. 91878). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 53 folia (complete). 6 lines. 32,5×10cm. Prachalit Newari script. 18th-19th Century CE? 10 chapters.
- NGMCP E 2511/1 (Hamburg no. 91877). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 47 folia (complete). 8 lines. 29×11,4cm. 959 NE (1839 CE). Prachalit Newari script. 10 chapters.
- NGMCP H 321/7 (Hamburg no. 12231). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 63 folia (complete-damaged). 5 lines. 29,5×6,8cm. Prachalit Newari script. 18th-19th Century CE?
- NGMCP H 380/8 (Hamburg no. 12219). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 17 folia (complete). 12 lines. 36×10,2cm. Prachalit Newari script. 764 NE (1644 CE). 10 chapters.
- (Unexamined:)
- NGMCP B 98/8 (Hamburg no. 12223; acc. no. 3-257). BCA. Sanskrit. 126 folia. 10,5×7cm. Newari script.
- NGMCP E 910/10 (Hamburg no. 12235). BCA. Sanskrit. 29 folia. 22,5×14,7cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 910/11 (Hamburg no. 12230). BCA. Sanskrit. 76 folia. 16,2×12cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1086/5 (Hamburg no. 12218). BCA. Sanskrit. 61 folia (incomplete). 22×11,8cm. Devanagari script.

- NGMCP E 1099/1 (Hamburg no. 12220). BCA. Sanskrit. 65 folia. 30,2×11cm. Devanagari script. 959 NE (1839 CE).
- NGMCP E 1375/2 (Hamburg no. 12214). BCA. Sanskrit. 46 folia. 30×8,2cm. Devanagari script. 1994 VE (1937 CE).
- NGMCP E 1375/3 (Hamburg no. 12217). BCA. Newari. 86 folia (incomplete-damaged). 33×9,8cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1553/2 (Hamburg no. 12212). BCA. Sanskrit. 79 folia (incomplete). 23,2×7,5cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1700/9 (Hamburg no. 73390). BCA. Sanskrit. 80* folia. 19,7×8,3cm. Newari script. (*Multiple-text ms.)
- NGMCP E 1709/5 (Hamburg no. 12234). BCA. Sanskrit/Newari. Paper (printed book). 171 folia (damaged). 26×19,3cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1730/16 (Hamburg no. 12230). BCA. Sanskrit. 76 folia (incomplete). 16,6×13,2cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1730/17 (Hamburg no. 12237). BCA. Sanskrit. 28 folia. 22,9×15,2cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP E 1789/39 (Hamburg no. 12233). BCA. Sanskrit/Newari. Paper (printed book). 176 folia. 26×18cm. Devanagari. 1072 NE (1952 CE).
- NGMCP E 1838/4 (Hamburg no. 110839). BCA. Sanskrit. 49* folia (damaged). 26,3×9,1cm. Devanagari script. 936 NE (1816 CE). (*Multiple-text ms.)
- NGMCP E 3227/17 (Hamburg no 114428). BCA. Sanskrit. 8 folia (incomplete). 24,7×11,7cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP H 3/3 (Hamburg no. 12215). BCA. Sanskrit. 6 folia (incomplete-damaged). 21,5×4,5cm. Devanagari script.
- NGMCP H 44/5 (Hamburg no. 12229). BCA. Sanskrit. 82 folia. 32,7×10,2. Newari script. 1044 NE (1924 CE).
- Nepal₂ (Manuscripts in the Asha Archives, Patan):³²³**
- Ash. 161. BCA. Newari. Paper. 65 folia. 7 lines. 30,4×11,0cm. Newari script. nanda śara khacare NE.
- Ash. 359. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper (book). 11 pages. 10 lines. 12,5×10,0cm. Devanagari script. Ch. 1 only.

³²³ Ms. no. according to Yoshizaki (1991).

Ash. 1037. BCA? [Bodhicaryāvatāra (bodhicittānuśamsā) ṭīkā sahita.] Sanskrit. Paper (book).
30 pages (page 31- missing). 26 lines. 30,2×20,0cm. Newari script (translation,
Devanagari.).

Ash. 2901. BCA. Sanskrit. 62 folia. 5/6 or 10 lines. 22,1×12,2cm. Devanagari script.

Ash. 4148. BCAP. Sanskrit. Paper (book). 57 pages (p.11 missing). 20 lines. 15,0×22,8cm.
Devanagari script.

Ash. 4149. BCAP. Sanskrit. Paper (book). 155 pages. 14 lines. 16,5×12,0cm. Devanagari
script.

Ash. 4188. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 48 folia. 6 lines. 26,5×9,0cm. Newari script. 937 NE (same
as NGMCP E 1838/4?).

Ash. 4504. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper (printed book). 342 pages. 25 lines. 19,5×22,5cm.
Devanagari script.

Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale):³²⁴

Par. dev. 78 (Devanāgarī 78 /Devanāgarī 85).³²⁵ BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 56 folia. 7 lines.
26,5×10,5cm. Devanagari script. 10 chapters.³²⁶

Par. dev. 79 [Devanāgarī 79/Burnouf 90(98?)].³²⁷ BCA. Sanskrit. Paper (Indian). 55 folia. 7
lines. 26×8cm. Nepali script. 18th-19th Century.³²⁸

Par. Pt. (Pelliot Tibétain) 794.³²⁹ BCATib₁. Tibetan Paper. 1 folia. Tis is the last leaf, Ka24,
of Lon. IOL Tib J 628.

Patna(/Tibet) (Patna Museum)³³⁰

Pat. 110 (Ngor monastery, near Shi gar tse; vol. XXI, no. 4).³³¹ BCA. Sanskrit. 14 folia
(incomplete). 12×2 2/3 inches. Māgadhī script.

Pat. 196 (Sa skya monastery, Chag pe lha khang; vol. VI).³³² BCA. Sanskrit. 23 folia
(complete). 6 lines. 22×2 inches. Māgadhī script.³³³

Stony Brook, New York (IASW)³³⁴

³²⁴ Ms. no. according to Filloizat (1941).

³²⁵ Fillozat (1941: 63); referred to as “Devanāgarī 85” or “Dev.” by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14).

³²⁶ Pezzali (1968: 51-52).

³²⁷ Filloizat (1941: 63-64); referred to as “Burnouf 98” or “Burn.” by La Vallée Poussin (1901-14).

³²⁸ Pezzali (1968: 52).

³²⁹ Mss. of the Pelliot Dūnhuáng collection; see Saito (1993).

³³⁰ Most mss. were photographed while the original was left in Tibet, while other mss. were purchased and brought to Patna.

³³¹ Ms. no. according to Saṅkṛityāyana (1935).

³³² Ms. no. according to Saṅkṛityāyana (1937).

³³³ According to Lindtner (1991) this ms. was brought from Tibet to Beijing in 1960, and is now kept at the China Library of Nationalities; the version in Patna is apparently only a photographed version.

IASW MBB-I-1. BCA. Sanskrit. Palm leaf. 38 folia (incomplete). 7 lines. 5×28 cm. Bhujimol
Newari script. 9 chapters.

IASW MBB-II-231. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 46 folia.

Tokyo (Tokyo University Library)³³⁵

Tok. 260. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 46 folia (complete). 6 lines. 131 2×3 in. Newari script.

Tok. 261. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 70 folia. 7 lines. 101 2×434 in.; Devanagari script.

Tok 262. BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. Two fragments: 1. 17 leaves. Siddhānta script; 2. 43
leaves. Newari script. 10×21 4 in.

Tok. 263. BCA. Sanskrit. Paper. 13 folia. 6 lines. 12×212 in. Newari script.

Tok. 264. BCA. Sanskrit. Palm-leaf. 60 folia. 5 lines. 101 4×2 in. Siddhānta (like Kuṭiḷa)
script.

Unknown location:

Unk. M (St. Petersburg?). BCA. Sanskrit. Paper (Nepali). 24 folia. 14 lines. 791 NE (1671
CE).³³⁶

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XVIII: 7, pp. 1-17.

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³³⁴ Ms. no. according to Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions (1975).

³³⁵ Ms. no. according to Matsunami (1965).

³³⁶ Minayev (1889: 154); Minayev states that this manuscript is part of his private collection.

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Synopsis

The thesis is concerned with the 7th Century Mahāyāna Buddhist text *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (BCA) and its significance as a vehicle for cultural exchange. We trace its history in India and beyond, from its proposed author Śāntideva's hand, its contemporary influence in India, and its impact in the lands—Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia, and beyond—and languages—Sanskrit, Newari, Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian, and others—where it travelled. The nature of its influence has varied with the times and places where it has found itself, but in all instances it received a prominent place of canonical status, and was mostly revered. This is perhaps surprising taking into account its late composition. As the thesis illustrates this is due to the orthopraxic nature of Buddhism, where the criteria for *buddhavacana* (word of the Buddha) is less based on historical assumptions, and more on the practical content of the Buddhist teachings. The BCA has received quite a lot of attention in modern scholarship since the first publication of a critical Sanskrit edition by Minayev in 1889. A large number of new manuscripts of the text have surfaced since then, and a separate chapter is dedicated to philological concerns and the dire need for a new and updated version that will take into account also the new knowledge we now have of the text's history. A mostly unnoticed commentary, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra-ṭippani*, also receives its long overdue attention in this chapter. The text is still very influential within Mahāyāna Buddhism today, and the last chapter presents a lecture given on the text by the 14th Dalai Lama in January of 2009. The Dalai Lama's approach is to relate the text's contents to modernity in order to again make it a relevant contribution in people's daily lives around the world.