

## The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* A Buddhist treatise translated into Western languages

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The European invasion of the East was a deed of violence on a grand scale, and it has left us the duty –*noblesse oblige*– of understanding the mind of the East. This is perhaps more necessary than we realise at present.

(Jung, in Wilhelm and Jung 1962: 137)

### Introduction

In this article I offer the initial findings from my research on translations in the West of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a 8<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist treatise by Śāntideva. The orientation of this study falls within the field of descriptive translation studies (Holmes, 1988) and presents a descriptive analysis of some of the translations from Sanskrit and Tibetan and their socio-cultural function.

In contrast to the numerous scholarly studies on Buddhism itself in the West since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Jong, 1987; Webb, 1974; Schwab, 1950; Takugai, 1942), studies on Western translations of Buddhist texts are scarce and have only appeared in very recent years. From those publications more directly related to my research which discuss the translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Tibetan, I would like to make particular mention of the following: the article by Ruegg (1992) “Some Reflections on Translating Buddhist Philosophical Texts from Sanskrit and Tibetan”, published in an Asian studies specialist journal; and the book *Buddhist Translation. Problems and Perspectives* (Doboom Tulku, 1995), a collection of papers read at an international seminar on this theme in New Delhi in 1990.

My own particular interest in Western translations of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* arose from a significant publishing event; this being the appearance of seven translations of this text in the space of just five years, between 1992 and 1997: two in French, two in Spanish, and three in English. This Buddhist treatise, which enjoys a privileged position in Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly in the Tibetan tradition, has never awoken such curiosity in the West since it was first translated by La Vallée-Poussin (1907)<sup>1</sup>.

### The author

There are various Tibetan documents that describe the life of Śāntideva, disagreeing only on a few details. The oldest is by the great Tibetan scholar and encyclopaedist Buston Rinchen (*bus ton rin chen*) (1290 –1364). The version that I give below is that by Khenpo Kunzang Pelden (*mkhan po kun bzang dpal ldan*), who lived at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the monastery of Guemang, in eastern Tibet<sup>2</sup>. This story is included in the commentary of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, *The Drop of Elixir, Words of the Master Mavjushri* (*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig 'grel 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thig pa*).

Śāntideva is one of the last great Indian masters who lived at the peak of Mahāyāna Indian Buddhism. He was born in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in India, in the ancient province of Saurāstra where his father was king, and given the name of Śāntivarman (Armour of

Peace).<sup>3</sup> From an early age he demonstrated a profound respect towards the spiritual masters and performed charitable acts among the poor and the sick. When his father died he was supposed to take on the position of king, but on the eve of his coronation he had a dream which led him to renounce the comforts of the court and enter the illustrious Buddhist university of Nālandā. Upon becoming a monk he was given the name of Śāntideva (Divinity of Peace). Very quickly, and apparently without anyone realising, he studied and assimilated the teachings of Buddha. However, his attitude resulted in his fellow monks regarding him as a lazy monk and he became known as Bhusuku, meaning “he who only knows how to eat, sleep and relieve himself”. The other monks were angry because they considered it immoral to provide support for a monk they considered to be a parasite with donations from the faithful. So, they decided to put him to the test so that they could rid themselves of him. He refused to accept this challenge, however due to the intervention of the abbot, the monk Śāntideva finally agreed to speak on some teachings that he had to improvise. This was the moment when the assembly of monks began to marvel at him. Śāntideva, without anyone being able to explain how, was suddenly sitting on the throne that the others had placed high up with the objective of making fun of him. This was how he began to expound his *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Towards the end of his discourse he rose up towards the sky and slowly disappeared until only his voice could be heard. His discourse was written down from memory resulting in two versions: the version by the scholars of Magadha, and the version by the scholars of Kashmir.<sup>4</sup> They record that during his discourse Śāntideva had recommended the reading of his two works, that all were unaware of, the *Śikṣāsāmuccaya* (Compendium of the Instructions), and the *Sūtrasāmuccaya* (Compendium of the sūtras). After searching for Śāntideva for a long time they finally found him in the south of India whereupon he stated that the true version was the one by Magadha scholars explaining that the two compendiums were hidden in his cell in Nālandā. Śāntideva continued travelling around India, practising the life of the perfect *bodhisattva* performing miracles and helping others: multiplying food to save thousands of people from hunger, healing the sick, and proclaiming his faith to others<sup>5</sup>.

### The Tibetan translations

When Buddhism came to Tibet in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the first concern of the Tibetans was to gain access to the canonical texts, most of them written in Sanskrit although some were written in other Indian languages. A royal decree ordered the transcription of the originals in Sanskrit before being translated into Tibetan. Snellgrove (1995: 637) states that the only cultural undertaking in the Western world comparable to this monumental task was the translation from Greek into Latin of all the early Christian literature and of all the writings of the Early Church Fathers. In the same way that there are two parallel versions of these Christian works, in Greek and Latin, the Indian Buddhist canon was translated in its entirety into Tibetan. Snellgrove adds that one can even say that the task of the translators in Tibet was more complicated as they had to create many philosophical and Buddhist terms in Tibetan, on a few occasions preserving the Sanskrit word. Under the reign of Relpachen (*ral pa can*) (815-838) an inventory was made of this new lexicon, thus creating a specialist Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionary (The *Mahāvinyūtpatti*) with various thousands of entries. The three successive revisions of the terminology used in the translations, the last at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, allowed for creating stable and appropriate equivalences to the degree that those studying Buddhism have used the Tibetan versions to correct the Sanskrit texts, or as substitutes when they do not have access to the original Sanskrit version<sup>6</sup>. The translations, that were always the result of a team of translators, an Indian

and a Tibetan, were painstakingly revised and corrected. It should be noted that the names of the translators and proofreaders were included at the end of the manuscripts.

There was a new wave of diffusion of Buddhism in the 11<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the large number of translations. These were new texts, but also there were revisions of texts translated during the first period of diffusion of Buddhism. Buston Rinchen (*bus ton rin chen*) (1290-1364) gave the almost definitive form to the two collections of the *Kanjur* (*bka' gyur*) and the *Tenjur* (*bstan 'gyur*).<sup>7</sup> This compilation was the result of a colossal work of exegesis by scholars and corresponds to the nucleus and model of all the philosophical Tibetan literature. Very strict criteria of authenticity were determined based on Buston for the *sutra* (“thread”, teachings of the Buddha), the *tantra* (“weave of the cloth”, secret teachings of the Buddha or of the *bodhisattvas* for advanced practitioners) and the *śāstra* (treatise by the Indian masters).

As regards the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, the Tibetan translators used various Sanskrit versions at the same time to translate and verify their translation. Three translations were produced, always the result of the collaboration between an Indian scholar and a Tibetan monk. The first was in the 8<sup>th</sup> century based on a manuscript from Kashmir. This was the version by the Indian scholar Sarvajñadeva and Kawa Paltsek (*ka ba dpal brtsegs*), the Tibetan monk who was one of the twenty five principal disciples of Padmasambhava<sup>8</sup> and one of the great translators, or *lotsawa* (lo ts'a ba), who took part in the Tibetan translation of the Buddhist canon in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The second version, at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, was a revision of the first version using a manuscript from the Madyadesh, and was the work of the Indian scholar Dharmashribhadra and the Tibetan monk Rinchen Zangpo (*rin chen bzang po*)<sup>9</sup>. Later on, the team Sumatkirti and Loden Sherab (*blo ldan shes rab*)<sup>10</sup> produced a final revision, considered the definitive version of the Tibetan canon, although Wallace (1997:8) states that it is not based on the Sanskrit version we have access to today.

## The text

There are two variations of the title in Sanskrit: *Bodhicaryāvatāra* or *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*. The title is rendered in Tibetan as *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*. As regards the interpretation of the title there are a number of translations<sup>11</sup>. André Bareau (1995: 392), who held the chair in Buddhist studies at the Collège de France, translates it as *Descente dans la carrière de l'éveil* (Descent into the path of awakening). Georges Driessens (Śāntideva 1993) explains in the preface to his edition that the literal translation in French is, *Entrée dans la pratique des héros pour l'éveil* (Entry into the practice of the heroes for the awakening). Isidro Gordi (Shantideva 1995), in his introduction translates it as *Guía a la forma de vida del Bodhisattva* (A guide to Bodhisattva's way of life). Anne Ansermet (Shāntideva 1985) renders it as *Une méthode pour s'engager dans les actes du Bodhisattva* (A method for engaging in the acts of the Bodhisattva). Yet another translator, Dokusho Villalba (Santideva 1993), gives the following title for his translation *La Marcha hacia la Luz* (The Advance towards the Light), justifying this translation of the Sanskrit based on the analysis of key words.<sup>12</sup>

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* occupies a privileged position in Mahāyāna Buddhism, as does the *Dhammapada* for Hinayāna Buddhism and the *Bhagavad Gītā* for Hinduism. The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is one of the principal texts in Mahāyāna Buddhism because it contains the essence of all the teachings. It has been described as a gem that adorns the diamond crown of Buddhism (Shantideva 1995: 6) and numbers among the most studied texts by the four Tibetan schools. Masters from all over the world have always used it for their teachings.

This short but significant work contains the essential points of Mahayana Buddhist practice and for over a thousand years has acted as a guide for people throughout India, Tibet, China and Mongolia who have wished to follow this path. (Shāntideva, 1979: 7)

Driessens (Shāntideva 1993) makes the comment that this work has a universal appeal despite its religious and cultural context, and has been a source of inspiration for many people throughout the centuries. Today it is one of the preferred texts among contemporary masters at a time when Buddhism is becoming more and more visible in the West.

Il fut au cours des siècles, le texte de prédilection des aspirants au plein épanouissement d'un Eveillé, une source d'inspiration intarissable, et reste, à l'aube du Bouddhisme en Occident, l'un de ceux que chérissent de nombreux maîtres contemporains.<sup>13</sup> (Shāntideva 1993: 7)

This text concerns the altruist attitude that characterises the *bodhisattva*<sup>14</sup> and, according to the Dalai Lama (1996<sup>b</sup>: 65), from all the literature that deals with this theme the text by Śāntideva is the most accessible text. In all the teachings of the Buddha there are different methods for training and transforming the mind, the objective being to bring about a radical change in our way of thinking and consequently in our life. Historically in Tibet practices and literature were developed with this purpose in mind inspired by the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*<sup>15</sup>. For this reason it is clear that the main function of the Śāntideva text is to instruct in a spiritual practice and is not simply a literary text. In fact we should bear in mind that within the Buddhist tradition the practitioners need to receive the text through oral transmission (Dalai-Lama 1996: 21).

The Śāntideva text, originally in four-line verses, comprises ten chapters<sup>16</sup>. The first chapter explains the benefits of the *bodhicitta* (translated as spirit of awakening, awakening mind, or heart of awakening mind) which is to experience the continual desire and sincere, spontaneous and living determination to reach the Enlightenment (the Awakening), with the sole objective of liberating all beings from their suffering and guiding them towards the state of Buddha. This chapter is oriented towards establishing the necessary growing interest in achieving this state. In Chapter two, Śāntideva gives advice on how to develop the *bodhicitta*: how to cleanse oneself of negative energy and enrich this energy through the accumulation of merits. Chapter three then goes on to discuss accepting this undertaking, how to formulate it, and to take the decision to achieve this altruist mind. Chapter four encourages the conscious application of the *bodhicitta*, the need for constant effort, and enumerates the disadvantages of abandoning this path. In Chapter five, having established now that all that is negative and positive depends on the mind, it goes on to explain how to protect the mind by being constantly and consciously alert. These verses speak of the ethical discipline to be applied, distancing oneself from what is negative, practising that which is positive, and benefiting others. In Chapter six, the author encourages the practice of patience to counteract hatred, and introduces the concept of three types of patience: to accept suffering, to keep the teachings ever present in the mind, to not engender the desire for vengeance. Chapter seven explains why perseverance is of primary importance and warns against the dangers of laziness which Śāntideva breaks down into three kinds: laziness that comes from apathy, laziness that comes from being attracted by what is negative, and laziness that comes from being discouraged. Chapter eight deals with the benefits of meditation or contemplation, which trains the mind to remain calm. Chapter nine is the most difficult and one of the most complex texts in Buddhist philosophy. It concerns wisdom, or transcendent knowledge, that is to know and experience the absence of the inherent entity of objects (which includes beings) and phenomena. This absence corresponds to the concept of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Finally, in Chapter ten Śāntideva

dedicates the accumulated merits, that is the positive energy, created whilst composing this work so that all beings can fulfil their desires and learn to think for the benefit of others.

### The translations into Western languages

So far my research into the translation of the *Bodbhicaryāvatāra* into Western languages shows that there are at least seventeen complete translations. The first of these, by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, was published in 1907 in Paris. We know that he made an earlier attempt to translate chapters 1-4 and 10, published in 1892, and later on, in 1896, a translation of chapter 5. The largest number of translations are in English and there being documentary evidence of eight translations, although one of them appears to be an abridged version of the original text. There are five translations into French, one of which is possibly a translation into French from an earlier English translation. There are two translations into Spanish, one of which is in fact a translation from a previous French translation. There are also references to two translations into German, one into Italian, and research still needs to be done regarding two further translations, one published in Copenhagen and the other in Poland. In the next section I offer an introduction to six translations of the *Bodbhicaryāvatāra* which I have had access to: two in Spanish, two French and two English. I present them in chronological order from the earliest to the most recent.

Stephen Batchelor

The edition by Stephen Batchelor, translated into English, was published in 1979 in Dharamsala (India) by The Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.<sup>17</sup> On the first page he presents the reader with the title in Sanskrit (for which he uses *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra*) and in Tibetan, and he introduces the authors as *ācārya* (master in Sanskrit) Śāntideva. In a brief introduction by the translator written in Switzerland, Batchelor provides a brief overview regarding Śāntideva. He goes on to explain that the *Bodhisattva* ideal in Mahāyāna Buddhism attempts to reach liberation for the good of all beings (see notes 1 and 5), as opposed to the Arhat of Hinayāna Buddhism which focuses on a search for one's own liberation. He then ends by offering a summary of the contents of the work. The translator signs the introduction using the name he adopted when he became a monk (Gelong Jhampa Thabkay) alongside his lay name, and leaves the reader in no doubt as to the purpose of his translation and the religious spirit with which it was undertaken.

In the Autumn of 1974, in response to the request of several Western Buddhists studying in Dharamsala, India, His Holiness the Dalai Lama encouraged and gave his blessing to the undertaking at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives of a project to translate Shantideva's *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*. (Shantideva, 1979)

In addition, in a preliminary note by the director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, it is quite clear that this translation was not made with academic purposes in mind. He comments that, with this English translation, the work of Śāntideva will inspire readers with the highest of *Bodhisattvas* ideals and will allow them to apply them to daily practice. At the end of the book there are ten pages containing 59 notes, a glossary of 65 Sanskrit terms with translations in Tibetan and explanations in English, and translation solutions in English with their equivalents in Tibetan, Sanskrit and comments in English. There is an index of chapter 9, and finally a colophon with a chronology of the three versions of the translation of the Śāntideva text into Tibetan.

As regards the translation process, the author explains that, on the advice of the Dalai Lama, the text was translated based on a Tibetan version following the oral

transmission of the Venerable Gueshe Ngawang Dharguey based on the commentary of a lama from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Ngultchu Gyalse Thogme Zangpo (dngul chu rgyal sras thogs med bzang po)<sup>18</sup>. This had been published in 1974 under the title, *The Ocean of Good Explanation, a commentary to (Śāntideva's) Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of life* (*Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i 'grel pa legs par pshad pa'i rgya mtsho*). It does not specify which Tibetan edition was used, however in the small bibliography (9 entries) he cites the Peking edition of the Tibetan Tripitaka *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, published in 1956 in Tokyo. The translation of chapters 1-8 and 10 is in verse form following the original text with some additions in parenthesis where considered appropriate, to quote Batchelor, "in verse form corresponding to the stanzas of the root text. Where necessary, words have been added in brackets from the commentary" (p. 6). Chapter 9 is translated into prose and accompanied with comments to help the reader interpret the text which is often difficult to follow, in the words of Batchelor, "most of the Commentary of T'og-me Zang-po has been included for the sake of clarifying the often cryptic style of the root text." (p. 7).

Stephen Batchelor has published a number of books on Buddhism that are both historical as well as philosophical, such as: *The Awakening of the West. The encounter of Buddhism*. He was formerly a Buddhist monk and at present lectures on Buddhism at the Université bouddhique européenne (UBE) in Paris.

#### Comité de Traduction Padmakara

This French translation, published in 1992 by the team from the Comité de Traduction Padmakara, bears the title *La marche vers l'Éveil*. The preface, written by the Tibetan master who signs himself "Pema Wangyal, un natif du Tibet insignifiant et dénué de toute qualité spirituelle, à qui fut donné le titre de Tsetrul Rinpotché comme on donne parfois à un vieux chien le nom flatteur de Lion"<sup>19</sup>, explains that this translation was based on the teachings of the Dalai Lama in Dordogne (France) in 1991 that were based on the Śāntideva text. The author of this preface ends by urging readers to make an effort when reading this text and to pray for an end to disease, famine, and the wars that afflict an infinite number of beings. The life of Śāntideva which follows the preface is detailed covering some four pages and comes from the commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Khenpo Kunzang Pelden (see section The Author). This commentary comprises 741 pages and is titled *The Nectar of Mavjushri 's Speech* (*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i tshig 'grel 'jam dbyangs bla ma'i zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thig pa*). At the end of the book there is a section including 125 notes, some of them quite detailed, followed by a glossary of 57 entries in French and Sanskrit. It also includes an extensive bibliography with 45 entries, one of which refers to a xylograph.

In a section prior to the Śāntideva text, the translators explain which texts were used as the basis for this translation. They began with the French version by Louis Finot from Sanskrit and revised the text with the Tibetan text whilst at the same time attempting to preserve the style employed by Louis Finot. They do not specify which of the Tibetan texts they used, but the reader is left to understand that it is the most recent, the one by Sumatukirti and Loden Sherab (*blo ldan shes rab*) (see section The Tibetan Translations). They also made use of a number of Western translations from Sanskrit and Tibetan, those by: Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Marion L. Matics, Stephen Batchelor, and Anne Ansermet. They also cite the autographed manuscript of the English translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*To Follow the Virtuous Life*) written in Darjeeling during the 1940s by one of the great contemporary specialists in Tibetan philosophy, Guendun Tchépel (dge 'dun chos 'phel) (1902-1951). They consulted a number of Tibetan commentaries, mainly those by Khenpo Kunzang Pelden, a disciple of Patrul Rinpotché<sup>20</sup>. The translators state that when they encountered certain difficulties with chapter 9 (see section The Text), they had to

reformulate it in its entirety with the help of an exegesis and five Tibetan commentaries on the same; these references are given in the bibliography. Finally, they conclude by acknowledging the respectful use they made of several commentaries and their debt to Louis Finot.

The French Padmakara publishing house is devoted to restoring (mainly into French or English) the essence and profundity of the great Tibetan texts. The translation committee is comprised of translators and proofreaders from various countries and are practising Buddhists, both religious and lay. The team responsible for this French translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* comprised the following members: Khyentsé Jigmé Rinpoché, Konchog Tenzin (Matthieu Ricard<sup>21</sup>), Héléna Blankleder, Christine Fondecave, Pascal Gérard, and Yahne le Toumelin.

### Georges Driessens

The translation into French by Georges Driessens entitled *Vivre en héros pour l'éveil*, was published in 1993. In the preface the translator explains who Śāntideva was, situating him within the history of Buddhism, then going on to discuss his translation. He explains that it is based on the Tibetan text, without specifying which version. However, at the end of his bibliography he states that he used the edition published in Dharamsala (India) by The Tibetan Cultural Printing Press (no publication date given). He says that his work is a new complete translation which he based on the commentary of Ngultchu Gyalse Thogme Zangpo (see previous section on Stephen Batchelor) and that he consulted the translations from Sanskrit by Louis Finot and Louis de La Vallée Poussin. Although he notes that they contain a number of inaccuracies, he acknowledges the qualities of these two translations, particularly the version by Louis Finot. The latter he considers to be brilliant, above all for its beauty of expression, although he confesses that he found it necessary to completely rewrite the translation (“*refonte complète*” p. 8). As regards the process used, the translator points out the difficulties he encountered when translating and his efforts to preserve the verse form of the original, or at least maintaining a certain rhythm. As regards chapter 9, Driessens notes that he presents verses 44 to 51 according to the order in the commentary by Ngultchu Gyalse Thogme Zangpo, which differs from the order in the root text. The translator’s preface is followed by a description of the life of Śāntideva inspired by Buston Rinchen (see section The Author), and then a brief introduction to the ten chapters that make up the text.

Georges Driessens was a Buddhist monk (Sherpa Tulku) from the Tibetan tradition and has translated other Buddhist texts, among which we can mention: *Le grand livre de la progression vers l'éveil*, by Tsongkhapa<sup>22</sup>; *La lettre à un ami (Subplekha)* and *Le traité du milieu (Mādhyamaka-śāstra)*, by Nāgārjuna<sup>23</sup>. This last translation, although a short text, is considered to be the fundamental work in which the author, Nāgārjuna, reveals his doctrine. There are still extant versions in Sanskrit, and a Tibetan and a Chinese translation.

### Dokusho Villalba

The Spanish version published in 1993 is the work of a Zen Buddhist monk, Dokusho Villalba<sup>24</sup>. It is the first Spanish translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, however it is not based on the original Sanskrit text or the Tibetan version. Instead it is a translation of the French translation by Louis Finot, which in turn is a translation of the Sanskrit text. This edition, which has a beautiful cover, comprises two parts: the translation of the Śāntideva text itself; and an introduction in a separate 14-page booklet. This first Spanish translation by Villalba was done keeping in mind a religious context, as the author himself makes clear by stating that it was written “in the Temple of Serene Light”. He goes on to explain the meaning of

the title, offers some explanatory details concerning the author, and provides some historical references concerning the translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. He then goes on to offer an introduction to each chapter, providing illustrative commentaries with elements from the Zen tradition.

Isidro Gordi

The translation by Isidro Gordi was published in 1995. It does not mention the name of Śāntideva on the cover and is the first Spanish translation based on the original text, in this case the Tibetan text.

*Me siento afortunado de poder contribuir a que las personas de habla hispana tengan acceso, por vez primera, a esta versión original, considerada una joya del pensamiento de la humanidad.*<sup>25</sup> (Shantideva 1995)

Gordi bases his translation on the last Tibetan version revised by Sumatkirti and Loden Sherab (*blo ldan shes rab*), following the commentary of his master Geshe Tamding Gyatso published as *Tesoros de la meditación*. In the brief prologue the translator explains the three stages of the translation into Tibetan from Sanskrit. Then, in a section titled “Introducción al Budismo y al Texto Raíz” (Introduction to Buddhism and the Root Text), the translator dedicates eight pages to an introduction to Buddhism with the purpose of clarifying some key concepts for understanding the text: a definition of Buddhism, an explanation of what meditation is, a section on the different forms of suffering, and another on the *samsāra* (“eternal erring”, the cycle of the existences). Later, on pages 13 to 29, he introduces the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* chapter by chapter, offering many details that prove beyond a doubt it was orally transmitted to him by a master.

Isidro Gordi is a Buddhist instructor. He has translated a number of books, among which are the teachings of Geshe Tamding Gyatso and the book by Batchelor *Alone with the Others*. He is also the author of *El arte de meditar (The Art of Meditation)* and *Dharma y Meditación, (Dharma and Meditation)* (Ediciones Amara).

Vesna A. Wallace y B. Alan Wallace

The English translation by Vesna A. Wallace and B. Alan Wallace is the most recent translation into a Western language to date and is dedicated to the memory of the Venerable Geshe Ngawang Dharguey.<sup>26</sup> It was published in 1997 and comprises a prologue where the translators situate the text within the Buddhist tradition and specify which original texts and commentaries were used. This is followed by an introduction with a brief biography of Śāntideva and an introduction to the text chapter by chapter. At the end they include a very comprehensive bibliography arranged by theme. The first section deals with the editions in Sanskrit, not only of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and his commentaries on it, but also of another text by Śāntideva, the *Śikṣāsāmuccaya* (Compendium of the Instructions). The second section discusses the translation in Eastern and Western languages of the works by Śāntideva, the two already mentioned and the *Sūtrasāmuccaya* (Compendium of the sūtras). The third section deals with the commentaries and a summary of the works by Śāntideva, the fourth includes two indices of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, and the fifth section deals with Śāntideva himself.

The peculiarity of this translation lies in the fact that it is the only English translation based Sanskrit text (and the commentary by Prajñakaramati<sup>27</sup>) and the Tibetan text (and two commentaries). When these two do not differ in content, the translation bases itself on the two texts, and where the Tibetan text differs significantly, the English translation of this is given in a footnote on the same page. The two Sanskrit editions used are those by Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1901) and P-L. Vaidya (1960). For the Tibetan text

they used the Derge edition, the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* by Sarvajvadeva and Kawa Paltsek (*ka ba dpal brtsegs*) (see section 'The Tibetan Translations'). They consulted the two Tibetan commentaries: *spyod 'jug rnam bshad rgyal sras 'jug ngogs*, by *rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen*; and *byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i'grel bshad rgyal sras rgya mtsho'i yon tan rin po che mi zad 'jo ba'i bum bzang*, by *thub bstan chos kyi graps pa*. Explanations are given in the form of footnotes. As regards the translation process, the translators point out the inherent difficulties noting that many of the Sanskrit stanzas are concise and at times cryptic using complex syntax. In contrast, they acknowledge the fact that they have been obliged to take certain liberties in order to provide an intelligible English version. At the end they express the desire that their translation may contribute to an understanding of the text, help to better appreciate it, and inspire future studies into the same.

Allan Wallace is a practising Buddhist, Doctor in Philosophy and Religion at Stanford University, and also one of the Dalai Lama's interpreters, particularly during meetings with Western academics. He has published a number of articles on the epistemology of science and religion, and has translated and commented on a number of Tibetan texts, among which are: *Transcendent Wisdom* (edition and translation of chapter 9 of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, with a commentary by the Dalai Lama).

## Conclusion

One can conclude from what has been discussed so far in this initial research into the translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* in the West, that the text by Śāntideva was available in a Western language from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and two eras of translation become apparent that respond to different objectives. During the first period the objective was academic. One could say that these translations have a research function within a university context, as understood from a Western perspective. What La Vallée Poussin and Finot tried to do, although they may well have had a genuine interest in the book and Buddhism in general, was to provide access to an ancient text.<sup>28</sup> Their important and painstaking work would be most comparable to the work of cultural archaeologists. In the second era, beginning in the 1970s<sup>29</sup>, we can see that many of these translations are the work of practising Buddhists (it remains to be seen if they all are), who received direct oral transmission of the text and who, with the exception of one, follow the Tibetan tradition. The translation by Batchelor is no doubt an important milestone in the history of the translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* because from this moment on this Buddhist treatise is no longer seen from the West as a mere object of historical-cultural study and has become more a living source of inspiration. This study clearly shows a very promising tendency as regards the history of the translation of Buddhist texts. By this I mean the degree of research work that is becoming more and more evident in new translations, and the endeavour to translate again what has already been translated taking into account many important sources, as much with regard to editions as translations into other languages and commentaries from great Buddhist Masters.

This initial study into the translation of the text by Śāntideva leaves us with a number of issues that still need to be addressed. First, we need to draw up an exhaustive list of Western translations and a descriptive account of them, as has been done for the six translations discussed in this article. Second, we also need to study the development of translation in the West in the light of the following hypothesis, "How is the changing function of these translations reflected in Western texts?". Looking further ahead, it would be interesting to see to what degree the translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* is representative of what has happened with other great Buddhist texts.

<sup>1</sup> The Mahāyāna, or “great vehicle”, reform movement which was born out of a reaction to the first Indian schools (called Hinayāna, or “small vehicle”), is the path of the bodhisattvas (see note 8). It consists of the practice of universal compassion and cultivation of the wisdom of emptiness, the ultimate nature of self and all the phenomena. Based on the motivation and wish to deliver all beings without exception from the sufferings of the unenlightened state, it leads to the attainment of buddhahood for the sake of others. (Shāntideva, 1997: 200)

<sup>2</sup> According to the version given by the Comité Padmakara, Shāntideva (1992).

<sup>3</sup> The dates (690-760) are a source of dispute. See Mudiyanse, N. Mahāyāna, *Monuments in Ceylon*. Colombo, 1967. Cited by Padmakara, Shāntideva, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Dokusho Villalba (Santideva 1993) speaks of three versions but does not mention his sources for this claim.

<sup>5</sup> *Bodhisattva*: someone who frees himself from the cycle of existences and realises all the qualities of the Awakening, but is at the same time moved by the compassion, he decides to appear in order to help beings. He never works for his own personal interest; all of his actions, words, and thoughts are devoted to the well-being of others. (Sāntideva 1992: 142)

<sup>6</sup> It is possible to reconstruct almost word for word an original Sanskrit text from the Tibetan translation. (Snellgrove 1995: 637)

<sup>7</sup> The Kanjur (*bka' gyur*: Word of Buddha translated), comprises 100 printed volumes of the teachings of Buddha, and the Tenjur (*bstan gyur*: Treatises Translated), is a collection of 250 printed volumes of treatises, commentaries, traditional teachings, hymns, and sacred poems, in all a total of 4,569 texts (Guillon 1995: 103).

<sup>8</sup> Padmasambhava: second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, philosopher of tantric Buddhism. According to hagiographic literature he was responsible for introducing Buddhism to Tibet.

<sup>9</sup> Rinchen Zangpo (958 o 957-1055): famous translator, the first of the translators from the new school of translation (*gsar ma pa*, according to Blondeau 1995). Under his direction a great number of canonical texts were translated with their corresponding extensive commentaries. He lived in India on three different occasions totalling 17 years. Upon returning to Tibet he founded a significant number of temples and monasteries.

<sup>10</sup> Loden Sherab (1059-1109)

<sup>11</sup> See bibliography on the translations of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

<sup>12</sup> “*Bodhi* is the Enlightenment, the Awakening, the ultimate state of conscience, the most elevated during human life: the state reached by a Buddha as a result of spiritual practices. *Carya* is the collection of practices, attitudes, (the path or the advance that leads to the state of Enlightenment. *The Advance towards the Light* is a poetic and didactic hymn that teaches us the practice and attitude to follow with a view to attaining this Supreme Good. It is also an epic hymn to those who undertake the Path of Awakening.” (Santideva 1993: II)

<sup>13</sup> For many centuries it was the privileged text of those who aspired to the complete development of an Awakening, an unceasing source of inspiration, and today is one of the texts that is preferred by many contemporary masters.

<sup>14</sup> (see note 5)

<sup>15</sup> Tenzin Gyatso (1998)

<sup>16</sup> This summary of the ten chapters is mainly based on my reading of the introduction by Isidro Gordi (Shantideva 1995: 13-29).

<sup>17</sup> Residence of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (spiritual and political leader), the exiled Tibetan government, and some of the Tibetans who escaped after the Chinese invasion.

<sup>18</sup> Ngultchu Gyalse Thogme Zangpo (1295-1369)

<sup>19</sup> “Pema Wangyal, an insignificant Tibetan completely lacking in any spiritual qualities who was given the title of Tsetrul Rimpoche, in the same way that an old dog is sometimes given the flattering name of Lion”.

<sup>20</sup> Among those masters who helped to keep the teachings of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* alive was Patrul Rinpotché, Orgyen Jigmé Tcheukyi Wangpo (*dpal sprul o rgyan 'gigs med chos keyi dbang po*), also known as Dzogtchen Palgué Tulku (*rdzogs chen dpal dge sprul sku*) (1808-1887), who was an outstanding

figure. He was born in the province of Kham (eastern Tibet) and after studying under some of the most illustrious masters of the period he became a wandering hermit. This wise man, considered the reincarnation of Śāntideva, lived in caves and woods and never had a house nor belonged to a monastery. When he died his only possessions were a begging bowl and a copy of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. His teachings on the Śāntideva text were many and he inspired the majority of commentaries that originated from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Shantideva 1992: xii-xiii and 124)

<sup>21</sup> Matthieu Ricard, after receiving his doctorate in Biology at the beginning of the 1970s, abandoned his promising academic career as a scientist and researcher to become a Buddhist monk. He has translated various works from Tibetan and, along with his father the philosopher Jean-François Revel, published *Le moine et le philosophe*, and with the astrophysicist Trinh Xuan Thuan, *L'infini dans la paume de la main: du Big Bang à l'éveil*. He is one of the Dalai Lama's translators and lives in the monastery Shechen Tennyi Dargyeling de Boudhanat in Nepal.

<sup>22</sup> tson kha pa, historical Tibetan master from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, founder of the Gelugpa line.

<sup>23</sup> Nāgārjuna, was one of the most important Buddhist philosophers whose commentaries on relative truth and absolute truth are the basis of the Mādhyamika school (of the Middle Way). His works are still considered the most authoritative regarding the number of philosophical concepts. Dates vary from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

<sup>24</sup> Zen (Japanese) or Ch'an (Chinese) is a Mahāyāna sect. (see note 1)

<sup>25</sup> "I am most fortunate to have been able to contribute by allowing Spanish speakers access, for the first time, to this original version which is considered to be a jewel among human thinking." (Prologue).

<sup>26</sup> The master who taught on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* en Dharamsala in 1972 and 1973 as noted by Batchelor and Driessens.

<sup>27</sup> Author of a commentary on the difficult points in the Bodhicaryāvatāra, Bodhicaryāvatārapravjikā (*byang chub gyi spyod pa la 'jug pa'i dka' 'grel*, Tenjur 3872).

<sup>28</sup> I have not taken into account the 1909 translation by Barnett as this appears to be an abridged version and I have not been able to ascertain which original text he used. Nor have I taken into account the 1923 version by Schmidt as at present I have not been able to consult this.

<sup>29</sup> With the exception of the manuscript of Guendun Chöpel (dge 'dun chos 'phel) preserved in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala, India) which for obvious reasons is not very accessible to Western readers (see 5.2).

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