


An Indian Classic in 19th-Century Tibet and beyond: Rdza Dpal sprul and the Dissemination of the *Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra**

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his paper highlights a particular episode in the entangled transmission history of the *Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra* (BCA). This prominent Indian Buddhist work outlines the path of a *bodhisattva*, the religious ideal of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and is nowadays considered among the world classics of religious literature. While it occupied a special position within many traditional Buddhist contexts—and in Tibet in particular—, it is only in the nineteenth century that it gained importance in the Rnying ma tradition and hence permeated *all* of the Tibetan Buddhist schools. As will be shown, Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887),¹ a charismatic yogin and scholar, can be placed at the centre of this development. His focus on a practice-oriented approach and a wide dissemination of the BCA's content not only fostered increasing interest within his own surroundings, but also opened up avenues for approaching this text that have come to be relevant in modern settings.

Introduction: the Bodhicaryāvatāra and its contemporary significance

The *Bodhicharyāvatāra* has been widely acclaimed and respected for more than one thousand years. It is studied and praised by

* In preparing this article I have been greatly indebted to the kind help of a number of individuals: Andreas Kretschmar and Kurtis Schaeffer for concrete advice and the inspiration that their own research instils; Blo gros 'phel rgyas for valuable assistance in reading through Dpal sprul's hagiography (*rnam thar*); Birgit Kellner, Christian Bernert, and Katharina Weiler for substantial feedback on the final article; and Philip Pierce for painstakingly correcting my English. Further I wish to thank the team of the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (Cambridge) for providing many of the sources that I used in the present research.

¹ Here and in the following, the dates of Tibetan personalities are based on the TBRC database, if not specified otherwise.

all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. I myself received transmission and explanation of this important, holy text from the late Kunu Lama, Tenzin Gyaltzen, who received it from a disciple of the great Dzogchen master, Dza Patrul Rinpoche. It has proved very useful and beneficial to my mind.²

These words, written by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho), are to be found in a foreword to a popular English translation of the BCA published in 1997. By that time, this work had not only become known widely within the traditional domain of Buddhism spread out over various cultural contexts across Asia, but had also received attention on a global scale, in academic as well as religious circles.

Within the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the philological interest that arose against the backdrop of British dominion in South Asia had brought manuscripts of numerous Buddhist works to the attention of European scholars. The subsequent canonization of these treatises in the form of critical editions laid the foundation for their academic investigation. In 1889, the Russian Indologist Ivan P. Minaev produced the first critical edition of the BCA,³ which was then replaced by a new edition (1901–1914) of his Belgian colleague Louis de La Vallée Poussin.⁴ The latter was also the first person to translate parts of the text into a European language (in 1892)⁵ and to explore its content in more detail. Since then, numerous translations and scientific publications that investigate individual aspects of the BCA emerged, exhibiting an academic interest that has continued up to the present. This interest must also be seen in connection with the significance that the text had acquired within religious contexts, both traditional and modern. In fact, the BCA can be regarded as an important vehicle that enabled the transmission of Buddhist teachings from a traditional (mainly Tibetan) setting to the arena of globalised religions, as the following examples aptly illustrate.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Ekai Kawaguchi, a Zen monk from Tokyo, left his country in search of not only concrete manuscripts but also the origins of the Buddhist religion in more general terms. He was the first Japanese to enter Tibet and Nepal, and managed to study for some time at Sera (*se ra*) Monastery in the

² Padmakara 1999a: VIII.

³ Minaev 1889; for brief descriptions of the background of this edition, see Liland 2009: 73f. and Stender 2014: 149.

⁴ La Vallée Poussin 1901–1914; this edition also contained the influential commentary by Prajñākaramati. In 1894, Haraprasād Śāstri also published an edition of the text, which did not, however, receive much attention, given the work of Minaev and La Vallée Poussin.

⁵ For some details on these translations, see Gómez 1999: 270.

vicinity of Lhasa.⁶ Having surely been exposed to the BCA during that period, he later (1921) became the first person to translate it into Japanese.⁷ The BCA is also among the first works that were translated from Tibetan into English by a Tibetan: when the Indian polymath Rahul Sankrityayan returned to his homeland from his search for Sanskrit manuscripts in Tibet, he was accompanied by Dge 'dun chos 'phel, a gifted if controversial scholar-monk from Drepung (*bras spungs*) Monastery. Becoming acquainted with Western knowledge during his travels, the latter came to enjoy a unique position in being trained under the traditional monastic education system, but also having access to modern science and global flows of information. He put his newly acquired knowledge of various languages to use to produce an English translation of the BCA in the 1940s.⁸ The text further gained the interest of European converts to Tibetan Buddhism, many of whom learned about its details in direct interaction with Tibetans who had settled in the district of Darjeeling and Kalimpong in North-East India. As an interface between Tibet and modern global flows of goods and information, this area became a major hub of intellectual discourses about Buddhism at the beginning of the twentieth century. The English-born Sangharakshita (Dennis Philip Edward Lingwood), for example, had practised and studied various forms of Buddhism in Kalimpong for fourteen years, and then returned to England to found the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (1967). While this organisation aimed to promote a decidedly "Western approach," its very first study group focused on a very traditional text: Śāntideva's BCA.⁹ This work was, and continues to be, used widely as a basic introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism and psychological transformation in most of the Buddhist centres with a Tibetan orientation that are mushrooming across the globe—a phenomenon rooted in the political tensions within Tibet and, even more so, in the search for alternative religious views and practices at the

⁶ Ekai Kawaguchi published an account of his time in Tibet under the title *Three Years in Tibet*; see Kawaguchi 1909.

⁷ Some remarks on that translation are provided by Liland 2009: 55f.

⁸ Several articles dealing with the modern translation history of the BCA refer to an English version produced by Dge 'dun chos 'phel, under the title "To Follow the Virtuous Life," a manuscript of which is likely to be preserved at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA); see Padmakara 1999a: 213, Liland 2009: 101, and Martínez Melis 2005: 6. Tibetan biographies of him mention that Dge 'dun chos 'phel translated the text or at least parts of it, but do not provide any further details; see Mengele 1999: 105f., and the short biography in Mi nyag mgon po 1996–2000. It seems that the original copy of this work was located by Kirti Rinpoche in his inquiry in the life and works of Dge 'dun chos 'phel in the early 1980s, see Kirti Rinpoche 2013: 10.

⁹ See Triratna 2012: 1. Sangharakshita's explanations of the BCA were published as "The Endlessly Fascinating Cry" (Sangharakshita 1978).

receiving end. In his role as both the political and religious leader of many Tibetans, and many sympathisers around the globe as well, Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has been most instrumental in popularising the teaching of the BCA. Not only has he inspired many of the translation projects relating to the text,¹⁰ but he has also taught it himself on various occasions. Published in the form of broadly accessible books for personal development, these explanations aim to convey aspects of the BCA to a vast and varied audience, one interested in Buddhism foremost as a means of spiritual practice.¹¹

The possibility of engaging with the text through so many channels seems to be indeed one reason for its popularity. As Luis Gómez has pointed out, people have engaged with the BCA in various ways: it can be viewed as either a spiritual text that addresses the “universal longings” of mankind, a practice manual that teaches meditation, a philosophical treatise that explicates the intricacies of Madhyamaka thought, or as a ritual and devotional text. In addition, most of its readers recognise the BCA’s poetical qualities.¹² Such a variety of approaches, however, is not only an effect of the diversity within the audience that this text encountered in its global spread in the twentieth century; as I will show in the following, it was also an important factor governing its transmission within traditional settings.

The Bodhicaryāvatāra in premodern contexts

Modern scholars commonly accept that the BCA was composed by Śāntideva at the monastic university of Nālandā at the beginning of the eighth century CE.¹³ Based on the number of Indian commentarial works that are included in the Tibetan Bstan ’gyur, one can assume that it became a rather popular work quite soon after its appear-

¹⁰ See Batchelor 1998, Padmakara 1999a, and Padmakara 1999b, for a few examples of such efforts.

¹¹ See Liland 2009: 56–58 and (for a synopsis of a teaching relating to the BCA by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama) pp. 59ff.

¹² Gómez 1999: 266f. See also Viehbeck 2005: 5f., for some examples of common approaches to the BCA.

¹³ Some details regarding the determination of Śāntideva’s precise dates are provided in Viehbeck 2005: 6. One should bear in mind that our knowledge of the details surrounding the composition of this work stands on very shaky ground, being based, most importantly, on the legendary material that has accompanied this text within its tradition of transmission. And while we tend to speak of the BCA as one text, attributed to a single author, one should realize that this again is a problematic assumption, as the existence of various, quite divergent versions of the work demonstrates. On the differences and relations between these versions, see Saito 1993.

ance.¹⁴ Along with the pan-Asian spread of Buddhism, this work was translated and adopted in various local contexts: it was translated into Tibetan for the first time as early as the beginning of the ninth century (by Ska ba Dpal brtsegs and Sarvajñādeva), into Chinese in the late tenth century (by Tiān Xīzāi), and into Mongolian in the early fourteenth century (by Nom-un gerel, Tib. Chos kyi 'od zer).¹⁵ While the BCA, as a late import from Buddhist India, did not attain to any major significance in China,¹⁶ and therefore not in the wider sphere of East Asian Buddhism either that developed from there, it became an extremely influential text in other local traditions, particularly in Tibet.

Its first translation into Tibetan by Ska ba Dpal brtsegs and Sarvajñādeva was found in Dunhuang, and has recently been made available to a wider audience through the research of Akira Saito.¹⁷ The text was then retranslated—on the basis of different manuscripts—by the trio of Dharmasrībhadrā, Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), and Śākya blo gros, and revised a last time by Sumatikīrti and Rngog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109).¹⁸ Blo ldan shes rab not only created the final Tibetan rendering of the BCA that was included in the Bstan 'gyur—and which also formed the standard basis for Tibetan scholars' engagement with this text—but he also augmented the Tibetan tradition of writing commentaries on the BCA. The enormous production of commentarial literature on this text indeed represents a good measure of its importance in Tibet and of the interest it triggered, beginning with the early Bka' gdams pa masters and later spreading to all other Tibetan Buddhist traditions.¹⁹

¹⁴ A list of these commentaries, ten in number, is provided in Dietz 1999: 35ff. Tibetan scholars even speak of over a hundred Indian commentaries on the BCA (see Kretschmar 2004: 11), a number that certainly must be taken figuratively.

¹⁵ See Liland 2009: 26ff., for an overview of the translation process in the respective contexts.

¹⁶ According to Liland (2009: 37ff.), the historical situation provides the most important reason for the lack of influence of this work in China. While many translation projects were carried out under governmental support during the Northern Sòng dynasty, these seem to have been politically motivated and had only little influence on Chinese Buddhism itself, which had already developed its own schools of Buddhist thought and practice. Another factor that is commonly mentioned is the poor quality of this particular translation of the BCA, see Gómez 1999: 263 and Nakamura 1996: 288.

¹⁷ See Saito 2000.

¹⁸ For the translation history of the BCA in Tibet, see Saito 1993: 14ff.

¹⁹ The commentaries of several masters achieved the status of a standard reference for the respective scholastic traditions. Rdza Dpal sprul, for example, mentions Bsod nams rtse mo (1142–1182), Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), Rgyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432), Dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1564/66), and Dngul chu Thogs med bzang po (1295–1369) as most influential (see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 805.1–3). According to Kretschmar 2004 (pp. 22–24), the following scholars can be

One notable exception to this general pattern is the Rnying ma school, where increased interest in the text surfaced only in the nineteenth century. It is possible, as I will show in the following, to trace back this change essentially to the activities of a single religious figure, O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po (1808–1887), a charismatic yogin and scholar, known better under his short title Rdza Dpal sprul.

The Bodhicaryāvatāra in the Rnying ma tradition

The argument for a considerable change in the significance ascribed to this work within the Rnying ma school can again be based on the observation of the production of—in a wide sense—“commentarial” literature. It is rather astonishing that there seems to be no commentarial work on the BCA written by a Rnying ma author prior to Dpal sprul. Even Dpal sprul himself produced no full-fledged commentary, but is acknowledged as the author of three rather short treatises on the BCA: *Spyod 'jug brgyud 'debs* (a supplication to the transmission lineage of the text), *Spyod 'jug sa bcad* (a detailed structural outline of the content of the BCA), and *Spyod 'jug sgom rim* (a short practice manual in which he picks out various contents of the BCA and arranges them into a set of contemplative exercises).²⁰ He further gave oral explanations of the text in various contexts, as will be elaborated below.

Two generations after Dpal sprul, this state of initial curiosity had changed completely. Students of Dpal sprul and their students in turn would go on to write a considerable number of commentaries on the BCA. Thereby they created an independent and compelling scholastic tradition relating to the text, which they were also willing to defend against differing interpretations. In my investigation of this development, I will start by drawing a precise picture of the textual production related to the BCA among Dpal sprul and his peers by

added to this list: Lho pa Kun mkhyen rin chen dpal, Bu ston (1290–1364), Bsod nams rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1312–1375), Sa bzang ma ti paṅ chen (1294–1376), 'Brug pa Pad ma dkar po (1527–1592), Mi pham (1846–1912), Mkhan po Gzhan dga' (1871–1927), Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa, Mkhan po Kun dpal (1862–1943), Zhe chen Rgyal tshab (1871–1926), and a certain Blo gros rgyal mtshan (given the bibliographical details in the TBRC database, the name of the latter should probably be corrected to Blo gros rgya mtsho, the seventh abbot of Rdzong (g)sar). Certainly many more works on the BCA were written, but their influence was limited to their more immediate surroundings.

²⁰ Critical editions of these texts along with English translations are provided in Viehbeck 2005.

addressing the individual works and their interrelations.²¹ In an attempt to explain this phenomenon, I will further include hagiographical material²² and consider some theoretical approaches to the investigation of intellectual development.

Textual production in the 19th century

That Dpal sprul's teaching activity indeed sparked an avalanche of interest in the BCA can best be grasped by looking at the number of works that were produced in this period.²³ To start with, there are the three short works that Dpal sprul himself composed on the BCA. Further, we have testimony of his teaching activity in the form of records that students produced on the basis of his oral explanations. The notes of his close disciple Mkhan po Kun dpal (1862–1943), for example, are preserved in a lengthy manuscript that is now kept at the Zhe chen Monastery in Kathmandu.²⁴ Lecture notes were also taken on Dpal sprul's explanations of the fourth chapter of the BCA by a certain 'Jig med chos 'phel bzang po, apparently over a period of

²¹ In many cases, my analysis of the texts is limited to a close investigation of the colophons and introductory passages, and a cursory reading of selected passages from the texts; a detailed enquiry into the content and interrelations of individual works will have to come later, as a follow-up to these tentative remarks.

²² I will for the most part be considering the *rnam thar* of Dpal sprul written by his close disciple Mkhan po Kun dpal (see *Dpal sprul rnam thar*). For working with this source, the following two prints were used: the edition included in one version of the collected works of Dpal sprul (*Dpal sprul bka' 'bum*), referred to as A, and the edition in the *Gsung 'bum* of Kun dpal (*Kun dpal gsung 'bum*), referred to as B. The default reference is according to edition A, whose readings I found in general more reliable, even if the print quality of B is better. Variants in reading are indicated by the respective abbreviations (A, B). Mention must be made of yet another block print of this text, contained in vol. 4, pp. 783–879 in another version of Dpal sprul's collected works (*Dpal sprul gsung 'bum*), with the slightly misspelled title *O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po'i rnam thar dad pa'i gsol smon bdud ris'i'i bum bcud*. The precise textual relation of these three versions to one another needs to be investigated.

²³ A list of these works is provided in the appendix; the relation of individual items to one another will be addressed in detail below.

²⁴ I would like to thank Matthieu Ricard who provided me with a provisional transcript of this text in 2004, titled: *Spyod 'jug la dpal sprul rin po che'i zhal rgyun zin bris* (see *Kun dpal zin bris*). It does not contain any details about the context of its composition, and later attempts to access the original manuscript (which was apparently written in Kun dpal's own hand) were not successful. This text was printed by Yeshe De Dharma Publishing and distributed at a *smon lam* gathering, but unfortunately cannot be purchased from the publisher.

nine sittings.²⁵ This text is included in one version of Dpal sprul's collected words, but no further details are known about the note taker.²⁶

The most systematic continuation of Dpal sprul's teaching tradition is probably found in Kun dpal's extensive commentary on the entire BCA. The colophon of this text explicitly states the wish of the sponsors and the more immediate initiators of this composition, such as the third Kaḥ thog Situ, Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1923/25), that it should be written according to the “instructions of the Lama” (*bla ma'i zhal rgyun*), that is, Dpal sprul—a request that Kun dpal dutifully followed.²⁷ Kun dpal writes that he based his commentary on notes that he took during lectures on the BCA and refers to one occasion when he received teachings from Dpal sprul over a period of six months at his religious centre in Dge gong, called Rig 'dzin 'chi med grub pa bshad sgrub dga' tshal. He also mentions this event in the introduction to his commentary,²⁸ where he points out that Dpal sprul was using the commentary of Dngul chu Thogs med bzang po (1295–1369), in such a way that it could be applied to personal practice and experience (*nyams len*). These explanations are of particular importance since they must be considered as Dpal sprul's last major teaching activity.²⁹ It is very likely that this is related to the notes that are preserved in the above-mentioned manuscript from Zhe chen

²⁵ See *Spyod 'jug le'u bzhi ma'i zin bris* 179.3: *mdo khams smad kyi paṇḍita chen po dpal dge sprul ba'i sku rin po che'i zhal snga nas spyod 'jug gis khrid lan grangs dgu tsam thob pa'i skabs [...]*.

²⁶ Considering that the person in question received teachings from Dpal sprul so many times, it is quite surprising that he is not more commonly known. It could of course simply be a case of reference under a secondary name. The name that is provided is not found in common databases or the list of students provided in Kun dpal's *rnam thar*. For bibliographical details, see *Spyod 'jug le'u bzhi ma'i zin bris*.

²⁷ The colophon is included in the translation of the entire commentary published by the Padmakara Translation Group (Padmakara 2008). Translations of the first five chapters along with a detailed introduction have also been produced by Andreas Kretschmar and are openly available at his homepage <http://www.kunpal.com> (accessed October 29, 2015). For the Tibetan text of the colophon, see *Kun dpal 'grel pa* 813.10ff.

²⁸ See Kretschmar 2004: 188f., for a translation as well as the Tibetan text.

²⁹ Further details are provided in Kun dpal's *rnam thar*, where it is stated that the teachings were given in an intimate setting with an audience of eight or nine monks, including Kun dpal and Tshe dbang grags pa, a son of the famous *gter ston* Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870). Instruction lasted for six months, beginning in the eighth Tibetan month and running up to the first Tibetan month of the Fire-Dog year 1885–86, just one year before Dpal sprul died; see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 838.4–5: *de skabs mchog gyur gling pa'i sras chung ba tshe dbang grags pa phebs nas | de dang mkhan kun dpal sogs grwa pa bryad dgu la thog 'grel steng nas spyod 'jug rgyas pa ston 'bring po nas me khiyi zla ba dang po'i phyed kyi bar zla ngo drug tu gsungs*.

Monastery.³⁰ Kun dpal took further notes during a forty-day series of lectures on the BCA given by Dbon rin po che O rgyan bstan 'dzin nor bu (b. 1851), another close disciple of Dpal sprul, which he was able to attend twice. In addition, Kun dpal's commentary was also informed by notes and oral explanations provided by other close students of Dpal sprul. The fidelity of the student's written notes to the master's oral explanations can be seen by comparing the structural outline of Kun dpal's commentary and Dpal sprul's own *sa bcad*, which diverge only in minor details.³¹ To say that Kun dpal's work provides the exact words of his master,³² however, would be jumping to conclusions, as an investigation of another commentary of one of his students will show.

'Ju Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846–1912), known as the foremost philosophical thinker of the Rnying ma tradition, and probably Dpal sprul's most famous disciple, wrote a commentary on the ninth chapter of the BCA, a chapter that was particularly important for the development of Madhyamaka thought. As stated in its colophon,³³ the work, completed on September 9, 1878, was composed not only after all available Indian and major Tibetan works on this topic had been consulted, but also after the oral teachings of Dpal sprul had been imbibed. A *rnam thar* of Mi pham specifies that he had received explanations of the text for a period of five days.³⁴ In the years to follow, this commentary would become famous across Tibet for igniting disputes with several Dge lugs scholars—controversies that continued, through an exchange of polemical writings, until Mi pham's death.³⁵ While it is often commonly assumed that this commentary reflects his master's reading of the ninth chapter, a comparison of structural frameworks may force a reconsideration of the matter. Mi pham deviates not only in the headings he gives to individual passages, but also, at least occasionally, in how the BCA is structured overall. His commentary must therefore be understood as an important inde-

³⁰ See Kretschmar 2004: 40, 189, and 379. Given the precise dates of the teaching, it seems, however, Kretschmar's interpretation of the textual sources must be corrected in its assumption that Mchog gyur gling pa was among the audience; rather, it is his son Tshe dbang grags pa, to whom Kun dpal is referring.

³¹ For Dpal sprul's *sa bcad*, see Viehbeck 2005: 91–157; for the outline of Kun dpal's commentary, see *Kun dpal 'grel pa*: 1–21.

³² Such an assumption, however conditionally phrased, is found, for instance, in Padmakara 2008 (xviii): "It could perhaps be said that *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech* is the commentary that Patrul Rinpoche so often gave by word of mouth but never actually wrote."

³³ See *Nor bu ke ta ka* 94.5ff.

³⁴ See Pettit 1999: 24.

³⁵ For a detailed analysis of the historical development of these controversies and, specifically, the debate between Mi pham and one of his Dge lugs pa opponents, Dpa' ris Rab gsal, see Viehbeck 2014b.

pendent work rather than as a record of his master's words.³⁶ In this regard it is interesting to see that Kun dpal seems to have chosen a middle way between his two predecessors. While he follows the *sa bcad* of Dpal sprul for, among others, the ninth chapter of the BCA, the actual phrasing is closely modelled after Mi pham's explanations. Often the latter's text is quoted almost verbatim without, however, including the idiosyncratic passages in Mi pham's commentary that were important for delineating the boundaries of his specific Rnying ma outlook. Written in sharp contrast to the philosophical system of the Dge lugs school, these were heavily criticised by the latter. Kun dpal's commentary lacks these scholastic edges and is more general in tone, and therefore also applicable to divergent scholastic traditions of Madhyamaka thought.³⁷

A more general approach is also taken in the commentary of another student of Dpal sprul, Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba (1871–1927), known more widely under his short title Mkhan po Gzhan dga'. He became famous in particular for his composition of concise "annotation commentaries" (*mchan 'grel*) on a collection of thirteen Indian texts (*gzhung chen bcu gsum*) widely perceived as encapsulating the fundamentals of Buddhist doctrine. Along with his explanations, these texts have constituted the basis for the scholastic education purveyed in "commentarial institutions" (*bshad grwa*), which had sprung up by the middle of the nineteenth century as an alternative to the "debating institutions" (*rtsod grwa*) of the Dge lugs school.³⁸ Gzhan dga' was instrumental in this development, inasmuch as he was involved in the educational programme of several such institutions belonging to different schools of Tibetan Buddhism.³⁹ His collection of core texts contains a commentary on the BCA, which is—like his other treatises—very general in nature and avoids specific

³⁶ I have discussed the relation between Mi pham's commentary and Dpal sprul's explanations in more detail in previous writings; see Viehbeck 2009: 4 and Viehbeck 2014b: 31.

³⁷ Viehbeck 2014b: 88f. describes in more detail how Kun dpal proceeded with regard to individual passages.

³⁸ See Dreyfus 2003 on the differences between the two educational systems practised in the respective institutions, and Dreyfus 2005 on the origin of "commentarial institutions." We will address this topic in more detail below.

³⁹ Most famously, his collection of textbooks served as the basis for the curriculum of the *bshad grwa* at Rdzong (g)sar, opened in 1918—which later influenced other institutions. A brief overview of the history of this *bshad grwa* is given in Kretschmar 2004: 97ff. According to Kretschmar (2004: 99), Gzhan dga' was also responsible for the educational programme at Śrī Siṃha *bshad grwa* at Rdzogs chen Monastery, taught at La si sgang in Sde dge, and founded *bshad grwas* at the Bka' brgyud monastery of Dpal spungs and at Skyed dgon don 'grub gling, a monastery in the Sa skya tradition.

topics that had interested the different scholastic traditions.⁴⁰ As stated in its colophon, it is based primarily on Indian treatises, but he also makes explicit reference to the teachings he had received from Dpal sprul, whom he praises for diligently putting the content of the BCA into actual practice during his entire life.⁴¹

As the example of Gzhan dga's activities in institutions of the Rnying ma, Sa skya, and Bka' brgyud traditions shows, Eastern Tibet in the nineteenth century was a network of close ties and interaction among the various religious traditions—a phenomenon that is often summed up by the expression “*ris med* (‘non-sectarian’) movement.”⁴² It therefore ought not to seem very surprising that Mi nyag Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa (1823–1905), a scholar steeped in the Dge lugs tradition, was among Dpal sprul's students who wrote important commentaries on the BCA. He was especially prolific and produced altogether three commentaries: a lengthy composition of 915 pages that deals in detail with the first eight chapters of the BCA and provides only the original text of the tenth chapter as a conclusion of the text, and two separate works—a detailed commentary and a work dealing with pertinent general issues (*spyi don*)—solely on the ninth chapter.⁴³ The colophon of the first provides hardly any information about the details of composition, but in his introduction Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa clearly refers to Dpal sprul as his master, and we therefore can safely assume that the latter's teachings must have been a significant source.⁴⁴ The colophon of the general discussion (*spyi don*) is more informative about sources. Thub bstan chos grags again makes direct reference to his master Dpal sprul,⁴⁵ and notes that he had occasionally received two-month-long stretches of formal expla-

⁴⁰ While Gzhan dga' certainly was aware of Mi pham's interpretation and the discussions it had triggered, his explanations of crucial passages (see his commentary on BCA IX.1 or IX.2 in *Gzhan dga' mchan 'grel* 411 and 412, respectively) show that he not only did not adopt the explanations of Mi pham, but that he generally seems to have attempted to present a non-controversial reading of the text, based on Indian material.

⁴¹ See *Gzhan dga' mchan 'grel* 474.6f.: ‘*phags pa'i yul gyi gnas lnga mthar son pa'i pañdi ta chen po rnam kyi legs par bshad pa la gzhi byas | sku tshé ril por byang chub sems dpa'i spyod 'jug gi nyams len la brtson pas chos dang rang rgyud gcig tu 'dres pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen dpal sprul chos kyi dbang po'i zhal rgyun drin can bla ma [...]*.

⁴² A critical evaluation of this term will follow below; see note 74.

⁴³ For bibliographical details, see *Kun bsod 'grel bshad*, *Kun bsod sher le gzhung 'grel*, and *Kun bsod sher le spyi don*, respectively. A complete translation of the *Kun bsod sher le gzhung 'grel* is found in Padmakara 1999b.

⁴⁴ See *Kun bsod 'grel bshad* 5.2. Others who have followed in Dpal sprul's teaching tradition point out the very close relationship here between student and master; see Kretschmar 2004: 24, 40, 127, 379. It seems rather surprising, then, that Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa is not mentioned in Kun dpal's biography of Dpal sprul.

⁴⁵ See *Kun bsod sher le spyi don* 303.2.

nations of the text from him, and also had heard scattered teachings of it in other contexts. These teachings were based mainly on Thogs med bzang po's commentary, and to lesser degrees on the work of other scholars—for example, the commentary of Rgyal tshab Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432) for the ninth chapter of the BCA. Accordingly, Thub bstan chos grags lists these and the famous Indian commentary of Prajñākaramati as his main sources. Several other Indian Madhyamaka works are mentioned as additional inspiration.⁴⁶ Rgyal tshab's commentary and certain “shorter and longer notes” are also mentioned as sources for his second work on the ninth chapter. While no explicit reference to Dpal sprul is made in the colophon, we can assume that this text, too, was written under the influence of his teachings.⁴⁷ The exact relation between Dpal sprul's teaching tradition as expressed in commentaries by other (non-Dge lugs) scholars and Thub bstan chos grags's works still needs, however, closer investigation. This issue is especially important in the light of the differences between the Rnying ma and the Dge lugs traditions that surfaced in the debates between Mi pham and a number of Dge lugs scholars.⁴⁸

It seems that these very controversies sparked new interest in the BCA, especially when it came to explaining its ninth chapter. Several scholars with close ties to the scholastic circles surrounding Dpal sprul and his disciples engaged in building up a Rnying ma scholastic tradition of its own of explicating this important Madhyamaka

⁴⁶ These details are provided in the colophon to his work; see *Kun bsod sher le spyi don* 304.1–5. Rgyal tshab Dar ma rin chen's commentary draws heavily on previous notes made by his master Tsong kha pa and became the standard reference source for the BCA in the Dge lugs tradition. Prajñākaramati's commentary is used widely by all Tibetan scholars as the most authoritative Indian commentary on Śāntideva's work. The additional Madhyamaka works Thub bstan chos grags mentions are: the collection of logical works (*rigs tshogs*) of Nāgārjuna, such as his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; further, Āryadeva's *Catuhśataka*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣasamuccaya*, and Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvātāra*.

⁴⁷ See *Kun bsod sher le gzhung 'grel* 447.4ff. The text was composed at Bkra shis lha rtse at Rdzong (g)sar, at the request of Lung rtogs bstan pa'i nyi ma (1829–1901/02), one of the main students of Dpal sprul, and one frequently mentioned in Kun dpal's *rnam thar*.

⁴⁸ Interestingly, Mkhan po Bkra shis dpal ldan from Skyabs rje Monastery, as a member of Dpal sprul's teaching tradition, explains the differences between Thub bstan chos grags on the one hand and Kun dpal and Mi pham on the other in terms of general *styles* that could be applied to approaching the content of the BCA. While the former favoured a “scholastic explanation style,” the latter two embody the “practice instruction style” (see Kretschmar 2004: 127f.). Given, in turn, the differences in style between Kun dpal and Mi pham—the latter drawing much more on scholastic details than the former—we also need to consider the distinct scholastic backgrounds, especially when comparing Mi pham's and Thub bstan chos grags's work.

text. Glag bla Bsod nam chos 'grub (1862–1944), for example, wrote several works on the BCA, of which his commentary on the ninth chapter is the most extensive.⁴⁹ His remarks in the author's colophon seem to hint at a controversy in the interpretation of the BCA, and Mi pham, as the figurehead of tensions between Dge lugs and Rnying ma interpretations of the text, is mentioned explicitly in the printer's colophon.⁵⁰ Further, Zhe chen rgyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal (1871–1926), a student of both Dpal sprul and Mi pham, composed two separate commentaries on the ninth chapter. His “word-by-word commentary” (*'bru 'grel*) is basically a subcommentary on Mi pham's *Nor bu ke ta ka*,⁵¹ and his “annotation commentary” (*mchan 'grel*) also follows along the lines of this work. It places itself in a lineage of oral instructions of “knowledge holders of the Earlier Translation [tradition],” thus leaving no doubt that the increasing interest in teaching and debating this text contributed to developing a compelling scholastic identity of relating its content for Rnying ma pas.⁵² Another short text, composed by 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma (1865–1926), the Third Rdo grub chen, who is also listed among Dpal sprul's close students in Kun dpal's *rnam thar*,⁵³ follows this trend, addressing as it does fundamental doctrinal differences in the understanding of the ninth chapter of the BCA.⁵⁴ This activity continued into the next generation of Rnying ma scholars, as aptly demonstrated by two brief works on the BCA by Thub bstan bshad sgrub rgya mtsho (1879–1961), another commentary on the ninth chapter by Blo gros rgya mtsho, the seventh abbot of Rdzong (g)sar, and an extensive commentary on the entire work by 'Jigs med rdo rje (1879–1940/41).⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Besides his commentary on the ninth chapter (*Bsod chos sher 'grel*), he also wrote a text that brings together Indian sources that support the content of the BCA (*Spyod 'jug lung btus*), along with a brief explanation of the opening passage of the BCA (*Spyod 'jug klad don*) and a brief discussion of a thorny issue in the sixth chapter of the text (*Bzod le dgag pa*).

⁵⁰ See *Bsod chos sher 'grel* 327.1–4.

⁵¹ This is very clear from comparing the actual content of the two works. Padma rnam rgyal expounds especially on points criticised by Dge lugs authors, and his efforts must obviously be seen as an attempt to defend the commentary of his master Mi pham, whom he addresses as a *kun mkhyen bla ma*, “omniscient teacher.” In the colophon (*Rgyal tshab 'bru 'grel* 704.2–5), he refers to the work of his master as *Sher tika chen mo*.

⁵² See *Rgyal tshab mchan 'grel* 825.2–4.

⁵³ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 846.5.

⁵⁴ See *Spyod 'jug dka' gnas gsal byed* 311, where the differences among the Sa skya, Dge lugs, and Rnying ma traditions regarding how the selflessness of arhats is to be understood are discussed.

⁵⁵ These texts are listed in the appendix below; bibliographical details are provided in the TBRC database.

*Evaluating and explaining intellectual significance—
some theoretical remarks*

While this list of works is only tentative and more works on the BCA were doubtless produced within the narrow confines of Dpal sprul's sphere of influence (and may come to light eventually), these texts already are striking testimony to the enormous change the BCA underwent in this short period. What, then, are we to make of this development? How can we go about looking for explanations?

In the following, I will not propose a comprehensive theoretical framework for doing so, but merely hint at some issues that might be worth looking at if we conceive of the described interest in the BCA as an intellectual development that is shaped in *social interaction*. In doing so, I will draw in a very general sense from some notions that were highlighted by the American sociologist Randall Collins in his ambitious attempt to write a social history of global intellectual change.⁵⁶

As Collins has noted, intellectual change and significance can be viewed as being created through processes of interaction between basically two different groups, a network of intellectually like-minded persons—students or disciples, so to speak—and a group of intellectual rivals. In both cases, interaction leads to increased public attention. This publicity is created in so-called “interaction rituals,” which may take the form of instructions or debate, depending on the principal intellectual identities and ties. Collins emphasises the performative power of personal encounters, but these are closely linked to the production of texts insofar as oral statements are meant to be seen as temporal and situational “embodiments” of contents preserved in written form.⁵⁷

By compiling a list of commentarial works on the BCA produced by Dpal sprul's peers (many of whom were his direct students), I had already adopted this perspective of looking for significance in the activities of a social network of allies. Once a broad impression is established of a network that emerged within a specific field of interest—in this case, texts relating to the BCA among a selected social group—we can proceed towards a more close-up perspective and try to specify the role that an individual—Dpal sprul—played in this development. And if references by students are accepted as one indi-

⁵⁶ Collins 2002; I am indebted to Kurtis Schaeffer for pointing out Collins's work.

⁵⁷ As indicated above, here I am referring in a very general sense to Collins's work, focusing on its theoretical considerations, esp. pp. 1–79. I do, however, agree with the assessment put forth by some of his critics that his approach—especially in its psychological dimensions—seems to be shaped heavily by present-day North American intellectual practice.

cator of the significance of their master, it seems plausible that their image of him or the role they attributed to him, if ascertainable, would provide a reason for this significance.

Each of the individuals mentioned earlier certainly had his own particular story to tell of direct or second-hand contact with Dpal sprul, and hence of very personal ways of relating to him. It may be worthwhile, however, to provide only one, albeit particularly detailed and consequential, case as an example of how Dpal sprul's engagement with the BCA was perceived by his students.⁵⁸ In the following, then, I will present passages from the *rnam thar* of Mkhan po Kun dpal. And while Kun dpal's account is very personal (I have made no attempt to validate individual assertions on the basis of independent sources), it offers at least one version of the historical background to Dpal sprul's engagement with the BCA.⁵⁹

An account of Dpal sprul's life

Mkhan po Kun dpal (1862–1943) was a close disciple of Dpal sprul and of the latter's student Mi pham. As noted earlier, he was present at Dpal sprul's last teachings of the BCA and contributed to a large extent—through the notes that he took on those occasions, his extensive commentary on the text, and his description of Dpal sprul's ac-

⁵⁸ Apart from an account of Dpal sprul's life that was compiled only recently, on the basis of information supplied by Smyo shul Mkhan chen (1931–1999) (see *Rnam thar ngag rgyun ma*), Kun dpal's remains the most detailed report of these events, and is also heavily drawn on by Smyo shul Mkhan chen.

⁵⁹ Texts of the *rnam thar* genre cast a very specific light on history, most importantly by drawing attention to their main subject. But given the fact that *any* historical account is determined by certain linguistic choices and conventions (as demonstrated most famously in Hayden White's *Metahistory*; see White 1987), we should probably not be exceedingly suspicious in regard to the basic elements Kun dpal's report includes. As Kun dpal explains in the colophon of his work, he based his account on the earlier notes taken by Grub chen Rin po che—most likely the Third Rdo grub chen 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma (1865–1926)—and A mchod Bsod tshé (*Dpal sprul rnam thar* 852.2f.), which he combined. The overall structure is modelled after an encomium of Dpal sprul by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892), which is attached at the end of the text and commented upon at the beginning of it. This encomium, Kun dpal emphasises, is “free from the faults of partiality [in the form of] exaggeration or depreciation, and therefore has become an object of well-founded trust” (*Dpal sprul rnam thar* 777.4: *sgro skur phyogs zhen gyi nyes pa dang bral bas yid ches khungs btsun gyi gnas su 'gyur phyir*). Further, Kun dpal stresses that his report represents an “ordinary general *rnam thar*” (*thun mongs spyi'i rnam thar*) that describes common events as witnessed by Kun dpal himself and other students, in contrast to the extraordinary events that might be addressed in an “inner” (*nanng*) or “secret” (*gsang ba*) *rnam thar*; see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 848.6–849.4.

tivity in his *rnam thar*—to the preservation of his master's legacy. In many details that Kun dpal reports about Dpal sprul's engagement with the BCA in this last account, he leaves no doubt that this work was of special importance to his master. While it is repeatedly emphasised, for example, that Dpal sprul abstained from gathering any possessions and making provisions for the future, a copy of this text was among the very few things that he did in fact keep.⁶⁰ Also, when Dpal sprul's students inquired in an intimate moment about the character of their master, he referred to this text as the key shaper of his mental outlook and behaviour.⁶¹ And in the same way as the BCA was cherished by Dpal sprul, he in turn was vital to the text—that is, to its content being spread among the people: Kun dpal reports numerous occasions when Dpal sprul engaged in teaching the text, and indeed such activity led his contemporaries to believe that he actually had been Śāntideva himself in a previous life.⁶²

While Kun dpal makes no attempt to be comprehensive in his listing of Dpal sprul's teachings, his account is not only impressive for the sheer number of these events, but also revealing regarding the location, the audience, and the form of the teachings. As we are informed, Dpal sprul, rather than taking up the duties at his monastic seat Rdza skya dgon, where he was recognised as a "tulku" (*sprul sku*), opted for an unsettled lifestyle,⁶³ roaming the land, studying, practising, and teaching at both secluded places and established monastic institutions. The geographical scope of his activity is therefore considerable: mainly he taught in the wider area of Rdza chu kha and Sde dge, ranging from places like Khri 'du in the north-east, to Gser thal in the west, and Kaḥ thog in the south. And, in many cases, this included teachings of the BCA.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 814.2f.

⁶¹ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 824.5.

⁶² According to Kun dpal, such was also implied in predictions by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po and the *gter ston* Bdud 'dul rdo rje, see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 786.2. The connection between Dpal sprul and Śāntideva is also highlighted in Mkhyen brtse'i dbang po's prayer to Dpal sprul included in version B of the *rnam thar*, see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* (B) 480.2f.

⁶³ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 792ff., for a description of the crucial situation when Dpal sprul decided to give up his position at Rdza skya dgon and abandoned all his possessions and responsibilities. It is this image of Dpal sprul as a wandering yogin that first will come to mind in later generations.

⁶⁴ As tradition has it, Dpal sprul taught the text more than a hundred times (Kretschmar 2004: 2). Kun dpal's *rnam thar* mentions concrete teaching situations in the following places and monasteries: Wa shul & Gser thal (p. 795.3f.), Dhi chung & A ri (p. 796.1), Rdo yul (p. 800.3f.), various places in the vicinity of Rdzogs chen such as Śrī sengha'i chos grwa, Padma'i thang, and Nags chung ma'i ri khrod (p. 800.4–801.1), Kaḥ thog (p. 802.4), Ser shul dgon, La ba, Khri 'du,

Thus the settings and audiences of the teaching varied widely. These included intimate bestowals of the teachings upon single students, such as the telling episode when Dpal sprul spent a couple of months in the forest instructing his closest disciple Smyo shul Lung rtogs (1829–1901/02):⁶⁵

Once both he (i.e., Dpal sprul) and Lung rtogs were residing in either Dhi chung forest or A ri forest. When it was time to eat, they would eat only a little from the bags of *tsam pa* they had, and then put the *tsam pa* bags up in a tree. [Then Dpal sprul] explained to him two four[-line] verses of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. With nothing to wear but a white woollen cape, [Dpal sprul] would take a stick and walk into the forest, bursting forth in loud laughter. Lung rtogs said that he did so also on the following days. Continuing on in this way for a couple of months, [Dpal sprul] was cheerful and said that this was what is meant in the words (of the BCA) “lonely and lovely forest spots.”⁶⁶

But Dpal sprul also taught the BCA to huge gatherings. Kun dpal emphasises that even laypersons were drawn to these teachings, during which Dpal sprul managed to convey the basic core of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought to what can be assumed to have been a less receptive audience:⁶⁷

Even laypersons, ordinary men and women, listened for a while to [his] explanations of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* in the Dharma assembly. Hence they understood the [general] outlook that the lifeline of the Dharma of the Great Vehicle is a virtuous attitude, that is, *bodhicitta*.

Various scholars in Dpal sprul’s tradition stress this point and claim that Dpal sprul was indeed the first to open up this text to a non-

and Sgrub brgyud dgon (p. 803.4f.), Rdza dgon (p. 804.4f.), Dge gong (p. 804.5), Rdza rgyal dgon (p. 806.2f.), and Sko ‘or (p. 838.5).

⁶⁵ Dpal sprul *rnam thar* 796.1–4: *dhi chung nags sam a ri’i nags su khong dang lung rtogs gnyis bzhuks skabs rtsam pa khug ma gang yod pa gsol tshigs dus cung zad gsol nas rtsam khug de shing la btags (A btags) | khong la spyod ‘jug tshig bzhi re gnyis gsungs | lwa ba dkar po zhig las mnabs rgyu med dbyug pa zhig bsnam nas ha ha zhes pa’i ‘ur sgra chen po mdzad de nags nang du byon bzhuks mdzad | yang phyi nyin de ltar mdzad par lung rtogs gsungs | de ‘dra ‘i tshul gyis zla ba kha shas bzhuks te | nags tshal sa phyogs dben zhing nyams dga’ dang | zhes pa de ‘di ‘dra la zer ba yin zhes thugs spro nyams mdzad |*

⁶⁶ Here, Dpal sprul quotes a line of the third verse of the second chapter of the BCA, where the adept is encouraged to mentally gather everything pleasant imaginable, including a lovely and secluded piece of forest, and prepare these as a perfect offering to the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

⁶⁷ See Dpal sprul *rnam thar* 818.1-2: ‘*jig rten mi nag gi skye bo pho mo rnam kyang spyod ‘jug bshad pa’i chos grwal du bag tsam re nyan pas | theg pa chen po’i chos kyi srog rtsa bsam pa bzang po byang chub kyi sems yin pa’i ‘gro phyogs shes shing |*

monastic audience—an assumption that can only be confirmed by further study of the social history of this work.⁶⁸ That these teachings did often attract a larger, more general audience can probably be concluded from the custom of propagating the text that Dpal sprul introduced: teachings were not just given once; rather, explanations and practical exercises were combined into a seminar devoted to the BCA conducted on an annual basis. Kun dpal mentions only three occasions when Dpal sprul established such a tradition: a twenty-day “Dharma session” (*chos thun*) at Ser shul dgon, a three-month seminar at Rdza dgon, and an unspecified “custom” (*srol*) relating to the BCA at Dge gong⁶⁹, but it is safe to assume that these were not the only such cases.⁷⁰

It is further stressed that Dpal sprul’s teaching was not confined to his own Rnying ma circles, but that it included institutions that belonged to other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism:⁷¹

He went to many large and small monasteries of the Sa [skya], Dge [lugs], Bka’ [brgyud], and Rnying [ma traditions] and gave extended explanations of such [texts] as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Zhīng sgrub*.⁷² Most of these [teaching traditions] have continued on [there] unimpaired up to the present day.

This point appears to be particularly important, especially when we consider that in each of the major Tibetan schools specific scholastic traditions of explaining the text had developed, revolving around commentaries of earlier scholars of the respective traditions. The specific allure of Dpal sprul for Kun dpal was that he had managed to acquire not only the necessary prestige to be invited by institutions of other traditions, but also the knowledge and openness to see the benefit of these individual scholastic traditions and to model his teaching accordingly:⁷³

⁶⁸ This point was stressed, for example, by Mkhan po A pad and Mkhan po Chos dga’, both of whom were interviewed by Andreas Kretschmar (Kretschmar 2004: 118 & 464).

⁶⁹ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 804.3., 804.4, and 804.5, respectively.

⁷⁰ Kretschmar mentions, for example, a three-month seminar that was established at Rdzogs chen (Kretschmar 2004: 39).

⁷¹ *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 803.5–6: *sa dge bka’ rnying gi dgon sde che phra mang por byon nas | spyod ’jug dang zhīng sgrub sogs kyi bshad pa rgya cher stsal ba phal cher da lta’i bar du ma nyams par gnas la |*.

⁷² This seems to be a work of the type that became popular in Tibet from the seventeenth century onward that deals with the attainment of rebirth in the realm of the Buddha Amitābha. For details of this development, see Kapstein 2004, esp. pp. 32ff.

⁷³ *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 805.1–3: *gsar rnying gi gzhung gang bshad thams cad de dag gi lugs ltar ma ’dres par bshad pa dang | khyad par spyod ’jug ni | sa skya pa’i nang du rje btsun bsod nams rtse mo’i ’grel pa ltar dang | dge lugs pa la zin bris dang dar tika (A*

All [his] explanations of scriptures of the Gsar [ma] and Rnying [ma traditions] were given according to the respective traditions, without mixing them. In particular, he (i.e., Dpal sprul) explained the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* according to the commentary of Bsod nams rtse mo among Sa skya pas, according to [Tsong kha pa's] "notes" (*zin bris*) and the commentary of Dar [ma rin chen] for Dge lugs pas, according to the commentary of Dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba for Bka' rgyud pas, and according to the great commentary of Prajñākaramati and the commentary of [Dngul chu] Thogs [med] for Rnying mas.

It is this idea of tolerance and mutual respect that—under the *ris med* ("nonsectarian") label—is sometimes and rather too simplistically identified as the unifying characteristic of a group of nineteenth-century Eastern Tibetan religious luminaries who are said to have exemplified it. Such an attitude, to be sure, seems to have been embraced by many scholars of that time and area, but we should be aware that these features were appreciated and propagated—as general qualities—by most Buddhist authors. And while there obviously was close interaction between scholars who belonged to different religious traditions, it seems to be more appropriate to think of them as a complex network of individuals with varying agendas than to postulate a conscious, well-defined, and unified *ris med* movement.⁷⁴ More interestingly, the passage above shows that while the other schools had managed many centuries earlier to create a specific scholastic tradition of interpreting this text, such was not the case with the Rnying ma. Inspired by Dpal sprul's teaching, however, his students would eventually close this gap: for generations of Rnying ma students of the BCA to come, Gzhan dga's and Kun dpal's commentaries will be used as a basic exposition of the whole text, while Mi pham's commentary will be crucial for understanding its ninth chapter.⁷⁵

tākra) ltar | bka' rgyud pa la dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i 'grel pa ltar dang | rnying ma'i nang sher 'byung blo gros kyi 'grel chen dang | thogs (A thog) 'grel ltar bshad par mdzad la |.

⁷⁴ In earlier writing, I have tried to bring more clarity to this issue by distinguishing ideological and sociological considerations; see Viehbeck 2014b: 68ff. Alexander Gardner has argued insightfully that the idea of a well-defined *ris med* movement is essentially a fantasy of Western scholars and translators (Gardner 2006: 112ff.). While I find that his discussion of the term and its development addresses many crucial aspects, I think that it will be fruitful for further research to consider more carefully the role that Tibetan scholars played in shaping its meaning—for example, the late Sde gzhung rin po che (1906–1987), the teacher and a main source of information for Gene Smith, who in turn was among the first to introduce *ris med* as a topic to Western academia.

⁷⁵ Such is evident, for example, in the educational training as described by different Rnying ma scholars in Kretschmar 2004 (pp. 59ff.), and corresponds with my own

For Kun dpal, Dpal sprul's success depended of course on his skills as a commentator, but also on the qualities gained by him through spiritual practice. As the continuation of the previous quotation illustrates, one of these qualities is impartiality, which not only provides a reason for the status accorded to the commentaries of the other scholastic traditions, but which is also postulated and valued in Dpal sprul's own engagement with the text:⁷⁶

During the time of these [earlier scholars], too, there was no taking sides [for or against] the system of the Gsar [ma] and the Rnying [ma traditions], or empty talk of refutation and ascertainment, that is, [mere] self-praise or disparagement of others; and he (i.e., Dpal sprul) explained [the text] according to the tradition of [individual] "commentator-scholars" ('grel pa mkhan po), without mixing in even a bit of talk that would have caused attachment or anger in specific contexts. He clarified their respective positions in an honest way (*kha gtsang*) and aimed at a correct [representation]; he steered [explanations] towards the essential point, did not fall into the extremes of too extensive or too condensed [an explanation], and based [his] explanations on [first-hand] experience. Whence even many Rab 'byams pas⁷⁷ from the prayer festival (*smon lam*) in Lhasa spread flowers of rejoicing and bowed down respectfully [before him].

In short, Dpal sprul is depicted as the ideal instructor. Not only did he know the different scholastic traditions and was able to present them faithfully, but he also was versed in putting the contents of the BCA into practice. This last aspect of Dpal sprul's teaching is indeed often presented as his particular "style."⁷⁸ His practice-oriented inclination not only is stressed in remarks made by his contemporaries,⁷⁹ but also comes out in Dpal sprul's own writing. We should not forget, after all, that it is a practice manual that stands out among the short treatises Dpal sprul authored in regard to the BCA. His *Spyod 'jug sgom rim*, a guide that proceeds through the original text step by step,

experience in various contemporary scholastic institutions within the Rnying ma tradition.

⁷⁶ *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 805.3–5: *de dag gi tshe yang gsar rnying gi grub mtha'i phyogs 'dzin dang | dgag bzhas gi zer mchu rang bstod gzhan smad (B smrad) sogs skabs su ma babs pa dang | dus kyi dbang las chags sdang gi rgyur 'gro ba'i gtam rnam cha shas tsam yang ma 'dres par 'grel pa mkhan po'i lugs ltar bshad pa de dang de'i rang bzhed kha gtsang gsal zhing | dag la zur phyin pa | don gyi gnad thog tu 'dril zhing | ha cang rgyas bsdu kyi mthar ma lhung ba nyams len gyi steng du bskor nas gsungs pas lha ldan smon lam rab 'byams pa mang pos kyang yi rangs kyi me tog 'thor zhing gus pas btud |.*

⁷⁷ These are scholars who have received a Dge lugs education and been awarded the highest academic title of Dge bshes Rab 'byams pa.

⁷⁸ See Kretschmar 2004: 41.

⁷⁹ See the previous remarks in Kun dpal's and Gzhan dga's commentaries, notes 28 & 41.

draws out individual elements, and arranges them into a set of spiritual exercises, must be clearly seen as an attempt to make the BCA's content immediately relevant to personal religious practice, rather than establishing a specific scholastic tradition.⁸⁰ And it is probably not too farfetched to assume that exercises similar to the ones described in the *Sgom rim* also featured in the aforementioned seminars on the BCA.⁸¹

From what we can gather from Kun dpal's account, it seems to be a combination of all these features that account for the enormous success of Dpal sprul's teaching activity. His zeal in spreading the teachings of this particular text meant that Dpal sprul was confronted with a highly diverse audience—diverse in terms of geographical origin, social standing (of both monastics and laypersons), and scholastic orientation. This required him to be able to adapt to the immediate context, and to cultivate a method of teaching that could satisfy a wide range of expectations. By focusing on making the content of the BCA accessible through spiritual *practice*, Dpal sprul managed not only to avoid the controversies that had evolved in Tibetan scholastic history, but also to make the text relevant to a wider audience. It is thus, as his biographer describes in the following colourful quote, that he was able to arouse unprecedented interest:⁸²

At places other than the great dialectical institutions, only the names of [texts] like the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* were known in earlier times, much less [their] meaning. Even having a copy [of the texts] was rare. But later, through the kindness of this venerable lama (i.e., Dpal sprul) alone, the teaching and study of Madhyamaka, the [Five] Dharmas of Maitreya, the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, *Sdom gsum*, *Yon tan mdzod*, etc. spread to every single place (*sa lang rdo lang*) in all three [areas]—upper, lower, and central—and it happened many times that the throats of little monks, from the age of ten onwards, were embellished by [the sound of reciting] the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

⁸⁰ See my recent article “Performing Text as Practice: Rdza Dpal sprul's Practice Manual on the *Bodhi(sattva)caryāvatāra*” (Viehbeck 2014a) for an overview of the content of the *Sgom rim* and its approach of focusing on practice-related aspects of the BCA.

⁸¹ Such seems to be true at least of the seminars conducted at Rdzogs chen Monastery, as described in Kretschmar 2004: 39 & 48.

⁸² *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 817.1–3: *sngon dus mtshan nyid kyi chos grwa che ba 'dra ma gtogs* (B *gtog*) *gzhan du spyod 'jug sogs mtshan tsam las don shes pa lta ci | glegs bam 'chang ba tsam yang dkon pa las slad nas rje bla ma 'di kho na'i drin gyis stod smad bar gsum kun tu | dbu ma | byams chos | spyod 'jug | sdom gsum | yon tan mdzod sogs kyi 'chad nyan sa lang* (B *om. lang*) *rdo lang du dar zhing btsun chung lo bca' bcu pa yan chad kyi nang na spyod 'jug gis mgrin pa brgyan pa ches mang du thon pa dang |*.

Clearly, Kun dpal does not hold back when it comes to praising the achievements of his master. And while one may wonder about the historical accuracy of the details of his depiction (Were the BCA and other texts really not known at all? Is it justified to ascribe the change to the effort of one single person?, etc.), Kun dpal's account provides striking testimony for the image Dpal sprul's peers had of him, and this in turn can provide some idea of how important a force he was in the dissemination of the BCA in that particular time.

Allies & others: Dpal sprul and his socio-religious context

Up to now we have approached the increasing interest in the BCA as a process of rising significance that was produced in social interaction among Dpal sprul's followers. We may, however, also direct our attention in the opposite direction, to see what kind of reaction this development evoked amongst adversaries, and thereby also to explore the socio-religious context in which his activity needs to be placed. To follow Kun dpal's lead in this regard would be to believe that Dpal sprul simply had no opponents. While this, again, is not surprising in an account that generally emphasises the amicable character of its main protagonist, precisely such assurances may have been a sign of possible opponents. At various places in his *rnam thar*, Kun dpal insists that Dpal sprul's activities were appreciated by members not only of his own school, but also of other traditions. Here it is highly interesting that Kun dpal singles out the Dge lugs side to demonstrate just how universally accepted Dpal sprul was: when Kun dpal emphasises, for example, that Dpal sprul was generally venerated by people of various social status—scholars, lamas, tulkus, ordinary monks, and even laypersons—of both the Gsar ma and the Rnying ma traditions, he makes an extra effort to point out that this included members of the Dge lugs school.⁸³ He provides concrete examples of a supposedly controversial explanation being accepted against all odds. When, for instance, Dpal sprul propounded his explanation of the *Uttaratantraśāstra* (*Rgyud bla ma*)⁸⁴ in front of an assembly of Dge lugs scholars, who took a different approach to explaining this text, his charisma led even the highest scholars of this tradition to succumb.⁸⁵ Elsewhere, Kun dpal points out that the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*—probably Dpal sprul's most famous work,

⁸³ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 834.3f. and 843.5.

⁸⁴ This work is more commonly known under the Sanskrit title *Ratnagotravibhāga* and is one of the core texts attributed to Maitreya, which explores the *tathāgata-garbhā* doctrine.

⁸⁵ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 803.6–804.3.

which introduces adepts to the foundational practices of the Klong chen snying thig system—was also very popular among members of the Dge lugs tradition throughout Tibet, and many are said to have kept a copy of it and to have secretly practised it.⁸⁶ And in an earlier quote we have already heard that such was also the case with Dpal sprul's explanations of the BCA, when "[...] even many Rab 'byams pas from the prayer festival in Lhasa spread flowers of rejoicing and bowed down respectfully" under the sway of Dpal sprul's qualities and his practice-oriented teaching style.

Clearly, these passages indicate that if one were to look for adversaries, then these would most likely have been found among members of the Dge lugs school. This point of view is hardly surprising if we consider the larger context of Dpal sprul's endeavours. The increasing religious activity in the nineteenth century in Eastern Tibet, of which Dpal sprul and his teaching of the BCA formed such a significant part, points in various ways to an atmosphere of tension between the Dge lugs school and other traditions. Dpal sprul and his contemporaries tended to have close ties with traditions other than the Dge lugs pa, the school which had gained not only religious but also political dominance in Central Tibet, and in most other culturally Tibetan areas as well. As a social group, Dpal sprul, his peers, and royal supporters in Khams may therefore have appeared to be a threat to Dge lugs pa supremacy, especially after the former had started to explore new areas of religious interest. As George Dreyfus has pointed out,⁸⁷ it is precisely in the middle of the nineteenth century in Khams that members of the non-Dge lugs traditions began to promote a new system of education in the form of institutionalised *bshad grwas*—institutions that focused on textual exegesis—to counter the predominance of the debate-based system practised in the Dge lugs tradition. These institutions admitted only monks, and hence started building up a stronger body of monastics in circles that had previously consisted to a large extent of non-ordained and less formally integrated tantric adepts—another point that could have been seen as a strategy to meet the Dge lugs school on its own terms (of “mass monasticism”). Beginning with the foundation of the Śrī Siṃha bshad grwa at Rdzogs chen Monastery in about 1848,⁸⁸ this model was implemented at various religious centres of non-Dge lugs traditions—for example, at Kaḥ thog (1906), Rdzong (g)sar (1918), Dpal yul (1922), Zhe chen, and Dpal spungs.⁸⁹ The scholastic curricula at

⁸⁶ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 816.3–5.

⁸⁷ See Dreyfus 2005, esp. pp. 286ff.

⁸⁸ According to Dreyfus 2005: 288; Kretschmar 2004: 27 judges that the foundation occurred in about 1842.

⁸⁹ See Kretschmar 2004: 27.

these institutions focused on varying sets of Indian Buddhist core texts, particularly on *sūtra* material, a field that previously had been perceived as the domain of the Dge lugs school, and certainly was not the traditional stronghold of the more tantric-orientated Rnying ma. And while figures like Mkhan po Gzhan dga' and Mi pham are most famous for having provided the educational standards for later generations, we should not forget that Dpal sprul, too, was a luminary of such institutions,⁹⁰ his teaching skills being indeed reflected in his writing. Among his many works we find “structural outlines” (*sa bcad*)—tools that are commonly used to aid oral exposition of the contents of texts—of many Indian works that display a form of scholastic interest quite similar to the one cultivated in the Dge lugs tradition.⁹¹ In particular, Dpal sprul's engagement with the BCA must be certainly seen in this light. After all, if Kun dpal's depiction in a previous quote holds true, then this text was commonly studied *only* in the “great dialectical institutions,” that is, in the institutions of and within the educational system promoted by the Dge lugs tradition, and it was only through the effort of Dpal sprul that it became more widespread in other environments.

In the face of these larger institutional and political tensions, which the BCA as a core text of monastic culture was part of, we easily understand why Kun dpal emphasises that no major opposition to Dpal sprul had arisen. And again, the practical orientation of Dpal sprul's teaching style may be seen as a plausible reason for that. Explanations in the form of contemplative exercises, as found in Dpal sprul's *Sgom rim*, clearly aim not only at a wider, more general audience, but also place the text within the framework of personal practice, thus putting it to some extent beyond the reach of, or making it immune to, the complexities of a more scholastic-oriented discourse.

This situation changed completely in the next generation. Though inspired by Dpal sprul's explanations, his student Mi pham wrote a detailed commentary on the ninth chapter of the text, in which he

⁹⁰ Kun dpal mentions, for example, that Dpal sprul taught at the Śrī Siṃha bshad grwa at Rdzogs chen Monastery; see *Dpal sprul rnam thar* 800.4f.

⁹¹ The second volume of his collected works (*Dpal sprul gsung 'bum*) contains *sa bcads* for Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, *Uttaratantraśāstra*, and *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (all attributed to Maitreya), and Mnga' ris Paṅ chen Padma rnam rgyal's *Sdom gsum rnam nges*. Apart from the preference for works connected with the *tathāgataḡarbha* doctrine and the neglect shown to logical works, these texts exhibit an interest that covers the same principal topics as in the Dge lugs school, which traditionally focuses on the “five great treatises” (*gzhung chen bka' pod lnga*): the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* attributed to Maitreya, Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*, Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, and Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* (see Dreyfus 2005: 276f.).

touches upon many of the philosophical intricacies that had emerged in regard to this topic in the different scholastic traditions. He thereby developed a specific philosophical stance for his own tradition that is formulated often in sharp contrast to, and even with direct criticism of, the Dge lugs school. As one might expect, he was heavily criticised by various Dge lugs pa scholars, and a debate on this matter was conducted over a period of almost thirty years through the medium of critical treatises. These events certainly heightened the significance of the BCA, not simply within the two principal parties, but in the Tibetan intellectual world as a whole. In fact, the production of the many commentaries specifically on the ninth chapter of the BCA in this period must be seen as a direct result of the controversies, as an attempt, that is, of their various authors to contribute their fair share to the debate and help to defend their own scholastic traditions. And although Mi pham and other later scholars were the focal point of the controversies, these certainly added to the reputation of Dpal sprul, who was regarded as the principal initiator within the Rnying ma tradition of the increasing engagement with the BCA.

*Concluding remarks:
a “Rnying ma” Bodhicaryāvatāra for modern times?*

To be clear, Rdza Dpal sprul was certainly not the first Rnying ma scholar to plumb the depths of the BCA. Given the broad Tibetan interest in this work, it is safe to say that the text must have earlier been taught in Rnying ma circles, at least to some extent. Indeed, in Kun dpal’s *rnam thar*, we are informed that Dpal sprul received explanations of this text from three different persons:⁹² Rdo bla ’jigs med skal bzang, who had recognised the young Dpal sprul as the reincarnation of the previous lama of Dpal dge;⁹³ ’jigs med ngo mtshar, a direct student of ’jigs med gling pa; and Gzhan phan mtha’ yas ’od zer (1800–1855). These last two are also mentioned in the transmission lineage that Dpal sprul lists in his *Spyod ’jug brgyud ’debs*.⁹⁴ This supplicatory prayer, however, does not trace the transmission of the BCA back to the “earlier translation period” (*snga dar*) exclusively through Rnying ma scholars (such is only the case for the period of the seventeenth century onward), but is rather similar to a transmission lineage defined by Bu ston in the fourteenth centu-

⁹² See *Dpal sprul rnam thar*: 790.4f.

⁹³ See *Dpal sprul rnam thar*: 788.6

⁹⁴ For an edition and translation of this text, see Viehbeck 2005: 20ff. The text is included in the fifth volume of the *Dpal sprul gsung ’bum*; see *Spyod ’jug brgyud ’debs*.

ry.⁹⁵ This suggests that the BCA was only of marginal importance in Rnying ma circles—which, if true, must have permitted Dpal sprul considerable freedom in his engagement with the text. Dpal sprul's decision to promote an approach that focuses on religious practice, however, is not an utter novelty. Even prior to Dpal sprul, practice-oriented texts on the BCA were frequently produced,⁹⁶ and the whole genre of *blo sbyong* literature, too, draws heavily on the BCA. This native Tibetan genre gained importance in all Buddhist traditions on the plateau, and surely must be seen as a model for Dpal sprul's *Sgom rim*.⁹⁷ In his efforts, this practical focus proved particularly successful; it enabled him to spread the teachings of the BCA in a variety of contexts that included laypersons and monastics from different traditions alike. While he clearly must be placed in the general context of an increasing interest in the scholastic matters of his own tradition, the actual formulation of such intricacies remained the task of his disciple Mi pham. With him, the Rnying ma tradition found its way to a definitive philosophical stance vis-à-vis the BCA, and his commentary earned the right to be placed next to the corresponding works of the Sa skya, Dge lugs, and Bka' brgyud traditions. While important as signature moulds of a school's thought, these commentaries speak to a very narrow scholarly audience, within traditional

⁹⁵ See Saito 1997 for a discussion of the lineage listed by Bu ston, and Kretschmar 2004: 48ff., for a discussion of various transmission lineages of the BCA.

⁹⁶ There is only one *sgom rim* text that was written on the BCA prior to Dpal sprul. This work, by Rong ston Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449), is so different from Dpal sprul's exegesis that a direct influence can be excluded; see *Rong ston sgom rim*. There are, however, many other works that relate to the BCA in a practice-oriented way, of which I will mention just two examples from Dpal sprul's time, produced by adherents of the Dge lugs school. Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823) composed a text on the practices of “exchanging oneself and others” (*parātmaparivārtana*) and training in “equality of oneself and others” (*parātmasamata*), exercises that are described in the eighth chapter of the BCA—practices also central to Dpal sprul's *Sgom rim* (see *Bdag gzhan mnyam brje sgom tshul*). Mkhyen rab Bstan pa chos 'phel (1840–1907/8) wrote a text that incorporates chapters one to three along with the tenth chapter of the BCA into a meditation manual relating to deities of the Bka' gdams tradition. The author acknowledges a certain Grub dbang Dpa' dge rin po che for having inspired the composition (see *Dngos grub yongs 'du'i snye ma* 592.1 & 631.2); according to the entry in the TBRC database, this is an allonym of Dpal sprul Rin po che, but this attribution seems to be doubtful.

⁹⁷ A general introduction to the history and features of this genre is provided in Sweet 1996. As I have described elsewhere (Viehbeck 2014a: 563ff.), a close relation of Dpal sprul's text to the *blo sbyong* genre is indicated not only by similarities in both style and concrete contents, but also by the text's own presentation. Indeed, it is referred to explicitly as a *blo sbyong* text in the *dkar chag* of Dpal sprul's *gsung 'bum* (see *Dpal sprul gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, p.17.4-5).

settings where the teachings of the BCA are transmitted, most prominently, in monastic institutions.

In the process of becoming a leading player on the stage of globalised religions in the twentieth century, however, Tibetan Buddhism was confronted with an audience that harboured radically divergent expectations. Consisting mostly of laypersons, these devotees responded more positively to practical instructions of use in daily life and personal spiritual practice than to lengthy scholastic studies. It is this state of affairs that needs to be considered as a further factor for the widespread and lasting fame that Dpal sprul achieved. Free from scholastic intricacies and rich in practical outlook, his teaching tradition caters very much to the needs of a modern audience, and it is hence not surprising when recent popularisers of the BCA like the Dalai Lama speak very highly of Dpal sprul, as we have seen at the beginning of this paper. The outstanding position and universal acceptance of Dpal sprul's role in the dissemination of the BCA must therefore be seen not only as the outcome of his engagement with the text, but also of the temporal conditions surrounding it—those of the nineteenth, as well those of the twentieth century.

Appendix: a tentative list of BCA-related works produced by authors with links to Dpal sprul

Relevance	Author	Work	Abbreviation	Content
1) BCA-related works by Dpal sprul				
	Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887)	<i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i sgom rim rab gsal nyi ma</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug sgom rim</i>	Practice manual on the BCA
	Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887)	<i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i sa bcad don gsal me long</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug sa bcad</i>	Structural outline of the BCA
	Rdza Dpal sprul (1808–1887)	<i>Spyod 'jug brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug brgyud 'debs</i>	Supplication to the transmission lineage of the BCA
2) Lecture notes on Dpal sprul's explanations				
	Mkhan po Kun dpal (1862–1943)	<i>Spyod 'jug la dpal sprul rin po che'i zhal rgyun zin bris</i>	<i>Kun dpal zin bris</i>	Notes on Dpal sprul's lectures taken by Kun dpal
	'Jig med chos 'phel bzang po (?)	<i>Spyod 'jug le'u bzhi pa'i 'grel pa dpal ldan bla ma'i zhal rgyun rab gsal</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug le'u bzhi ma'i zin bris</i>	Notes on Dpal sprul's explanations of the fourth chapter of the BCA
3) Commentaries of contemporaries who explicitly refer to Dpal sprul				
	Mkhan po Kun dpal (1862–1943)	<i>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</i>	<i>Kun dpal 'grel pa</i>	Extensive commentary on the entire BCA
	'Ju Mi pham (1846–1912)	<i>Shes rab kyi le'u'i tshig don go sla bar rnam par bshad pa nor bu ke ta ka</i>	<i>Nor bu ke ta ka</i>	Commentary on the ninth chapter of the BCA
	Mkhan po Gzhan	<i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa</i>	<i>Gzhan dga' mchan 'grel</i>	General "annotation commen-

	dga' (1871– 1927)	<i>la 'jug pa zhes bya ba'i mchan 'grel</i>		tary" on the BCA
	Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa (1823– 1905)	<i>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</i>	<i>Kun bsod 'grel bshad</i>	Detailed com- mentary on the first eight chap- ters of the BCA; includes also the verses of chapter ten
	Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa (1823– 1905)	<i>Spyod 'jug shes rab le'u'i spyi don rim par phye ba zab mo rten 'byung gi de kho na nyid yang gsal sgron me</i>	<i>Kun bsod sher le spyi don</i>	Work address- ing general issues raised in the ninth chap- ter of the BCA
4) Other works of contempo- raries likely to be influenced by Dpal sprul				
	Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa (1823– 1905)	<i>Spyod 'jug shes rab le'u'i gzhung 'grel zab mo rten 'byung gi de kho na nyid gsal ba'i sgron me</i>	<i>Kun bsod sher le gzhung 'grel</i>	Detailed com- mentary on the ninth chapter of the BCA
	Glag bla Bsod nams chos 'grub (1862– 1944)	<i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa shes rab le'u'i dka' 'grel lung rigs 'od snang</i>	<i>Bsod chos sher 'grel</i>	Commentary on difficult issues raised in the ninth chapter
	Glag bla Bsod nams chos 'grub (1862– 1944)	<i>Spyod 'jug tu drangs rgyu'i lung btus rin chen phreng ba</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug lung btus</i>	Assemblage of Indian sources in support of the content of the BCA
	Glag bla Bsod nams chos 'grub (1862– 1944)	<i>Spyod 'jug klad don</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug klad don</i>	Brief explana- tion of the opening of the BCA
	Glag bla Bsod nams chos 'grub (1862– 1944)	<i>Spyod 'jug bzod le'u'i gtso bo dgag pa</i>	<i>Bzod le dgag pa</i>	Brief refutation of a controver- sial issue in the sixth chapter
	Zhe chen rgyal tshab Padma	<i>Spyod 'jug sher le'i 'bru 'grel kun mkhyen bla ma'i</i>	<i>Rgyal tshab 'bru 'grel</i>	Subcommentary on Mi pham's <i>Nor bu ke ta ka</i>

	rnam rgyal (1871– 1926)	<i>gsung las btus pa rab gsal nor bu'i sgron me</i>		
	Zhe chen rgyal tshab Padma rnam rgyal (1871– 1926)	<i>Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa'i shes rab le'u'i mchan 'grel don gsal me long</i>	<i>Rgyal tshab mchan 'grel</i>	“Annotation commentary” on the ninth chapter, draw- ing upon Mi pham's <i>Nor bu ke ta ka</i>
	Rdo grub 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma (1865– 1926)	<i>Spyod 'jug dka' gnas gsal byed</i>	<i>Spyod 'jug dka' gnas gsal byed</i>	Work on im- portant general issues raised in the BCA
5) Later writ- ings				
	Thub bstan bshad sgrub rgya mtsho (1879– 1961)	<i>Spyod 'jug bsngo le'i nyams len zin tho</i>		
	Thub bstan bshad sgrub rgya mtsho (1879– 1961)	<i>Spyod 'jug brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs bdus rtsi'i 'khri shing</i>		
	Blo gros rgya mtsho (19th c.)	<i>Spyod 'jug sher le'i rgya cher 'grel mchan snying po'i don gsal nyin byed chen po</i>		
	'Jigs med rdo rje (1879– 1940/41)	<i>Spyod 'jug 'grel pa byang chub gzhung lam gsal byed nyi ma'i snang ba</i>		

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