Three Parallel Verses in the *Buddhacarita* and the *Aśokāvadāna*

Kensuke OKAMOTO

*Aśvaghoṣa’s Buddhacarita* (abbr. *BC*) was composed in the 1st or 2nd century C.E. Moreover, Chapters 26-29 (the so-called *Aśokāvadāna*: abbr. *AA*) of the *Divyāvadāna* were compiled around the 2nd or 3rd century C.E. The compilation dates of the two texts are close. Also, both these texts have a common new feature, previously unknown, namely they include an almost complete biography of the Buddha from his birth to the parinirvāṇa. Therefore, we might expect these two texts to have a close relationship. In fact, Gawróński points out that *BC* and *AA* have one parallel verse, as well as, some passages in common. However, there has been no further attempt to compare these texts.

Below, we examine three more verses in *BC* and *AA*, which are parallel word for word. As a result, a great portion of the lost original Sanskrit texts of these verses in *BC* can be recovered from the Sanskrit texts of *AA*. We can also see a closer relationship between *BC* and *AA* than it has generally been assumed by previous scholars.

* The following Sanskrit texts are literally quoted from the *Divyāvadāna* of Cowell edition. Variants of Sanskrit texts are referred to in the notes. Solid underline (_): words appearing only in *BC*; dotted underline (___): words appearing only in *AA*; wavy underline (_): corresponding words but not identical.

**Parallel verse 1**

(a) ’phags pa mau rya (rgya’i CD) dpal des (de NP) skye dgu’i (dgur CD) phan don du //
(b) ’jig rten kun la mchod rten mtshan ma byed du bcug //
(c) gtum po mya ngan med nyid thob nas sa la ni //
(d) chos rgyal mya ngan med nyid las (de CD) thob par gyur // [*BC* 28.64]

(A) āryamauryaśrīḥ ⁷) sa prajānāṁ hitārthāṁ

---1187---
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(B) kṛṣṇam stūpāṁ kārayāṁ āsa lokam
(C) candāśokatvam prāpya pūrvam prthivyāṁ
(D) dharmāśokatvam karmanāṇa tena lebhe // [AA 381.26-382.2]

Note: mtshan ma (= symbol or mark) in BC line (b) does not appear in AA. However, a corresponding word is found in the *A-yu wang jing* (T 50.135b2: 堂印世間 = mark the world by the stūpa). Therefore mtshan ma is most likely not an addition of the Tibetan translator but goes back to a lost Sanskrit word. Dr. Mitsuyo Demoto suggested to restore an original wording stūpāṃkam (for stūpānkam) of which only the aksara kam was omitted by inadvertency. The restored text can be translated as follows.

BC: He (= Aśoka) who was the glory of the noble Maurya [dynasty] had made the whole world marked by stupas for the benefit of the people. [Previously, he] obtained [the epithet of] "Aśoka the Fierce" on the earth, [but now, he has obtained the epithet of] "Aśoka the Righteous King" through that act.

AA: He (= Aśoka) who was the glory of the noble Maurya [dynasty] had made the whole world [marked by] stupas for the benefit of the people. Previously, [he] obtained [the epithet of] "Aśoka the Fierce" on the earth, [but now, he has obtained the epithet of] "Aśoka the Righteous" through that act.

[Parallel verse 2]

(a) mngon du byas pa'i mchod rten bdun po de rnams las //
(b) drang srong de yi gdung rnams mau rya(rgya CD) des blangs nas //
(c) dpal ldan mchod rten ston ka'i sprin gyi'od rnams kyi //
(d) stong phrag brgyad cur babs(bcas C) pa dus su zhag gis byas //[BC 28.65]

(A) tābhyas 10) saptabhyas 11) pūrvikābhyaḥ kṛtibhyo
(B) dhātuḥ 12) tasya rṣeḥ 12) sa hy upādāya mauryah 13) /
(C) cakre stūpānāṁ sāradābhraprabhānām 14)
(D) loke sāsiti sāsad 15) ahna sahasram //16) [AA 381.19-22]

Note: It is necessary to correct mngon du (= actually or really) to sngon du (= previously) in BC line (a), according to pūrvikābhyaḥ (= previous) in AA line (A). Kṛti- (= structure)
in **AA** line (A) might stand for *mchod rten (= stūpa or caitya)* in **BC** line (a). *Stong phrag brgyad cu-* in **BC** line (d) means 80,000, but it can hardly correspond to *sāṭīti ... sahasram* in **AA** line (D). The usual number 84,000 is found in the Chinese translations 17) of both **BC** and **AA** but it is missing in Tibetan and Sanskrit texts of this verse. The meaning and function of *babs pa* in **BC** line (d) is not yet clear to me.

**BC:** The Maurya (= Aśoka) obtained relics of the Ṛṣi (= Buddha) from those seven stūpas built in the past, and built in due course in a (single) day (?)80,000 magnificent stūpas that had the splendour of the clouds of autumn.

**AA:** The Maurya (= Aśoka) obtained relics of the Ṛṣi (= Buddha) from those seven structures (= stūpas) [built] in the past. Ordering [it], he immediately built in the world 1,080 (?) stūpas that had the splendour of the clouds of autumn.

**[Parallel verse 3]**

(a) *dga’ byed grong (greng P) gnas mchod rten brgyad pa dang po ni //*
(b) *de yi dus su gus ldan klu rnams kyis bsrungs te //*
(c) *de phyir gdung rnams thob pa ma yin rgyal po des //*
(d) *der byas pa la ma dad (dang NP) rgya chen gyur pa’o // [BC 28.66]*

(A) rāmagrāme 18) tv aṣṭamam stūpam adya ...
(B) nāgās tatākālam bhaktimanto rārakṣuḥ /
(C) dhātuny 19) etasmān nopalebhe sa rājā
d(D) śraddhābhū 20) rājā cintayati yas tv atatkṛtvā 21) jagāma // [AA 380.26-29]

**Note:** It is necessary to correct *adya (= today)* in **AA** line (A) to *ādya (= foremost)* on the basis of *dang po (= foremost)* in **BC** line (a). Line (D) of **AA** is remarkably irregular metrically 22). Therefore the editors are anxious to make revisions (V: śraddhābhū(?) rājā cintayati yas tv etat kṛtvā jagāma //; M: śraddhālū rājā yas tv akṛtvā jagāma //). However, this problem can be solved with the help of **BC**. First, *rājā cintayati* 23) (= king considers) can be deleted because it is missing in **BC**. Second, *yas tv atatkṛtvā* should be corrected to *yastvam takṛtvā* according to the footnote of **CN**. Thus, line (D) can be read as follows: *śraddhā bhūyastvam takṛtvā jagāma*. This phrase is similar with *der byas pa la ... dad rgya*
chen gyur pa'o in BC line (d). However, I cannot make any suggestions about ma in BC line (d) (24). But if this ma is deleted, the passage can be translated as follows:

**BC:** At that time, pious Nāgas were protecting the eighth foremost stūpa that lay in the Rāma village. Therefore, the king did not obtain relics. **After having done it (= having failed to obtain the relics (??)),** [the king's] faith grew.

**AA:** At that time, however, pious Nāgas were protecting the eighth foremost stūpa in the Rāma village. Therefore, the king did not obtain relics. **After having done it (= having failed to obtain the relics (??)),** [the king's] faith grew.

As we have seen, these three verses correspond to each other largely. By comparing them, some of the difficulties in both texts can be solved. Moreover, we are able to recover the three Sanskrit verses of BC from the corresponding part of AA. Finally, we can find a closer relationship between BC and AA than it has generally been assumed by previous scholars.

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**Abbreviation**


**Note**

1) The Sanskrit text of BC is extant through the verse 310f chapter 14 (with some lacunae). However, the work is thought to have originally consisted of 28 chapters, because the Chinese (Fo suo xing zan『仏所行讃』T. No. 192) and Tibetan translations (Sangs rgyas kyi spyod pa zhes bya ba'i snyan ngag chen po) both consist of 28 chapters. 2) In this article, Aṣokāvadāna (= AA) stands for Chapters 26-29 in the Divyāvadāna. 3) Cf. Kensuke Okamoto 岡本健資,『Divyāvadāna 第27章に見られる仏跡巡礼とBuddhacarita』(The Buddhacarita and the story of Ašoka's pilgrimage in Divyāvadāna, Chapter 27),『東方学』(TŌHŌGAKU) 110, 2005, pp. 136-148. 4) A. Gawronski, Studies about the Sanskrit Buddhist Literature, Krakowie, 1919, pp. 49-56. The parallel verse that has already been noted is as follows: tato nṛpas tasya niśa-mya bhāvaṃ putrabhidhānasya manorathasya / snehāṣya lakṣmyā vayaasaś ca yogyām ajñāpayām āsa vihārayātrām // [BC 3.3] \( \divides \) tato nṛpas tasya niśāmya bhāvaṃ putrabhidhānasya manorathasya / snehāc ca yogyāṃ manaśaś ca buddhāv ajñāpayām āsa vihāya yātrām // [AA 408.1-4]. 5) BC 28.64 (C 111b3-4; D 102b3-4; N 118b5-6; P 123b6-7) = AA (CN 381.26-382.2; V 241.7-10; M 55,11-14); BC 28.65 (C 111b4; D 102b4-5; N 118b6-7; P 123b7-124a1) = AA (CN 381,19-22; V
Three Parallel Verses in the *Buddhacarita* and the *Āsokāvadāna* (K. OKAMOTO) ( 79 )

241.1-4; M 55.4-7; BC 28.66 (C 111b4-5; D 102b5; N 118b7-119a1; P 124a1-2) = AA (CN 380.26-29; V 240.14-17; M 52.17-20). 6) I hereby mention only parallel verses. However, the two texts have a parallel passage that has not yet been noted (BC 14.45-46 [P 64b1-2; D 52b6-7] ≅ AA 422.10-13). They are both about the suffering in the five *gatis* of *samsāra*. 7) āryo mauryāśrīḥ M. Obviously correct! 8) lokaś CN n. 7. 9) M: kṛtsne śūpaṁ yaḥ kārayāmāsa loke / 10) tābhyāḥ V. 11) saptābhyāḥ V. 12) tasyaṃ M. Obviously correct! 13) mauryaṁ CN n. 3. 14) sāradabhra- CN n. 4. 15) sāsad CN n. 5. 16) M: loke sāṣiḥ hyaṁni cātuḥsahasraṁ / 17) Fo suo xing zan 『仏所行讃』『開彼七王塔 以取於舍利 分布一旦起 八萬四千塔』(T 4.54b8-10); Za a han jing 『阿育王經』『阿育王經』『於八塔中 取世尊舍利 我孔雀姓王 一日中造作 八萬四千塔 光明如白雲』(T 50.135a25-27). 18) 'sti M. 19) dhatun M. 20) Speyer points out that *sraddhabhu* should be corrected to *sraddhālū* (J. S. Speyer, Critical Remarks on the Text of the Divyāvadāna, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band XVI, 1902, p. 348). 21) yastvam tatkṛtvā (mss. ABD); yastvatkṛtvā (ms. C) CN n. 5. 22) The meter of these three parallel verses is Vaiśvadevi.

23) This *rāja cintayati* in AA line (D) appears in the *A-ya wang jing* 『阿育王經』『阿育王經』『於八塔中 取世尊舍利 我孔雀姓王 一日中造作 八萬四千塔 光明如白雲』(T 50.135a9-11). 24) There is a text recording the king’s acquisition of relics from the stūpa of the Nāga (see the Za a han jing 『雜阿含經』T 2.165a17-18, 21-22). Therefore, we should be careful about correcting the text to *der ma byas pa la*.

*I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Katsumi Mimaki and Professor Kiyoshi Okano for their kind suggestions. After my completing this article, Professor Michael Hahn and Dr. Mitsuyo Demoto gave some important suggestions. Moreover they suggested to emend *tat kṛtvā jagāma* [this is not a compound, MH] (in the parallel verse 3) as *takṣte syāja-gāma*. They gave more suggestions, but I was not able to reflect those suggestions this time enough. I apologize to them at this point and I’d like to express my gratitude to them.*

(Key Words)  *Buddhacarita*, *Āsokāvadāna*, *Divyāvadāna*, *Āsvaghōsa*, *Āsoka*  
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