Studies on Dharmakīrti’s religious philosophy (3):
Compassion and its role in the general structure of PV 2

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1. Introduction

1.1. The focus of the present study is PV 2.120–131ab (§2). In those verses, Dharmakīrti attempts to prove, against a Mīmāṃsaka opponent, that compassion,¹ when practiced constantly over a myriad of successive lifetimes, is liable to increase gradually until it may become the very essence of a given mental series.

That argument largely rests on the belief in compassion’s “spontaneity” (svarasavāhitva, etc.), a notion that itself cannot be fully understood without appealing to the Mahāyāna dogma of the three “objects” of immeasurable (apramāṇa) sentiments. Since I contend that understanding that doctrinal theme, especially in its ANŚ formulation, is essential to grasping the full meaning of PV 2.120–131ab, I will here take up a detailed exegesis of the ANŚ, the BoBh, the MSA(Bh) and their explanation by Sthiramati (§4). Contrary to Takashi Iwata, I tend to believe that Dharmakīrti did not commit himself on the causes and conditions that lead to the initial impulse toward the constant practice (abhyāsa, bhāvanā) of compassion. This was also DeVendrabuddhi’s and Śākyabuddhi’s understanding, both of whom, by resorting to the traditional themes of gotra and kalyāṇamitra (§3), remind the exegete of another Mahāyāna doctrinal complex that was well in favour in Idealist sources.

1.2. In contrast to Dignāga,² Dharmakīrti shows a constant concern for grounding logic and

¹ On compassion in Dharmakīrti, see Inami 1986, Dunne 1996, Franco 1997: 4–8, Iwata 2011. The research for this paper was made possible through the generous support of the Swiss National Research Fund. Financial support for its English translation was provided by the Fonds Elisabet de Boer (Lausanne). I wish to thank T. Iwata for having put the manuscript of his study at my disposal.

² PV 2 is Dharmakīrti’s exhaustive commentary on the benedictory verse (maṅgalaśloka) of PS. In that verse, Dignāga attributes five properties to the Blessed Buddha (or rather: describes him by means of five properties): the Blessed One is (has become and is similar to?) a means of valid cognition (pramanābhiṣṭa); he strives for the good of the world (jagaddhitaśīraḥ); he is the teacher (śāstraḥ), the sugata, the protector (tāyin) of living beings. In his own commentary (PSV) to this verse, Dignāga subsumes the last four properties/epithets under
epistemology in reality. This is the case for his theories of language and universals, perception and reasoning. Even what falls under buddhology is not an exception. But in order to secure the validity of Dignāga’s inference regarding the Buddha’s authority as a source of knowledge, Dharmakīrti had to explain the properties/epithets introduced by his predecessor in terms of a network of causal relations that would allow logical “retrogression.” From the outset, that epistemological necessity led Dharmakīrti into a “narrativization” of the fourfold structure inherited from Dignāga. For as is obvious, every causal sequence implies a process in time. And when it comes to buddhology, a chronological sequence generally coincides with a narrative or “biographical” sequence. We could therefore reasonably expect that Dharmakīrti would appeal to the more or less standardized descriptions of a Bodhisattva’s career, i.e., to a set of narrative sequences that would be recognizable both doctrinally and textually. These sequences provide Dharmakīrti with the model for a unilinear causal process in the form of a narrative where both norm and mythology are intertwined. The categories inherited from Dignāga then serve to mark the sequence or periods of that process. Such periodization, however, does not always fit perfectly with the standard descriptions of a Bodhisattva’s career. In other words, in Dharmakīrti the fourfold structure inherited from Dignāga is superimposed on a complex series of narrative micro-sequences that are always doctrinally recognizable. And the true basis for the causal relations introduced among those properties/epithets is to be found in the concatenation of these micro-sequences. At the end of this paper, I will take up one of those narrative micro-sequences, namely, the micro-sequence of (conventional) bodhicittotpāda and its concomitant pranidhāna (§5). For that notion seems to me capable of explaining why the property of striving for the good of the world, that is to say the property of being moved by compassion, is the direct cause of the property of being the Teacher, and the indirect cause of the very authority (prāmāṇya) of the Buddha in salvational matters.

2. The systematics of karuṇā

2.1. At PV 2.34b–119, Dharmakīrti presents his arguments in favour of rebirth. In his PVP to PV 2.119, Devendrabuddhi summarizes the position as follows:3 “In this way, the [uninterrupted] series of births and deaths is established; hence the constant practice (abhāyaṣā) of mental qualities such as compassion is [made possible over these successive lifetimes], and there is no incompatibility in [the claim that those mental qualities] become the essence [of a mental series] if [their] practice is extremely intense.” Then follow two formal arguments (prayoga) using a svabhāvatā as evidence and taking great compassion (mahākaruṇā) as their subject. In the first case, the evidence, “being a mental quality” (manoguna), is said to

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3 PVP D51b4–5/P58a8–b1: de ltar na / skye ba dang 'chi ba'i rgyun grub pa de ltar na snying rje la sogs pa'i yid kyi yon tan rams goms pa yod pa dang / shin tu goms pa yod pa na de'i bdag nyid du gur pa 'gal ba yod pa ma yin no //. Note also PVV 53,13–14: tad evam … dehanivṛttāv api janaparamparāsambhavante viketaḥ kṛപḥyāṣa ity abhyāṣa seti samarthitam //.
imply the property to be proven, namely, “to become the entire essence of man if its practice is extreme[ly intense].” In the second case, the property of “being a mental quality that [always] improves with constant practice” is said to imply the property of “gradually becoming the essence of man as a result of an extreme[ly intense] practice.” This then is broadly the doctrine that Dharmakīrti will attempt to establish at PV 2.120–131ab: as a result of a constant practice over a myriad of successive lifetimes, the mental quality of compassion gradually forms the very essence of the mental series, to the detriment of opposing mental events (dharma).

2.2. It should be noted at this point that compassion is defined in the Buddhist tradition in terms of its intention (bzhed pa), object (yul = viṣaya), aspect (rnam pa = ākāra) and nature (rang bzhin/rang gi ngo bo = svabhāva/svarūpa).

(1) Disinterested action guides the compassionate being: “[compassion] does not rest on the [expectation] of a benefit in return (pratyupakāra), or on [reputation and honour];” it consists in acting with the sole good of others (parārtha) in mind.

(2) Compassion is “equality toward all beings” (sarvasattvāṇa maitrī) so that suffering acquires the property of being unable to reappear (*apunarutpattidharma).

(3) Compassion “has as its aspect the desire that [beings] be entirely liberated from the suffering [that afflicts them]” (*ātyantaduḥkhaviyogeccchākāra) so that suffering acquires the property of being unable to reappear (*apunarutpattidharma).

(4) Finally, the nature of compassion is the “absence of hatred” (advēṣa).

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4 See PV D51b5–7/P58b1–5 (with the example of a śrotriya who has become a kāpālika), together with PVT Nye D116a4/P142a2 and PVT Nye D116a5/P142a2–3.

5 Note PVT Nye D88a7/P107b4–5: thugs rje* yang ci zhig bzhed pa na’am / gang la’am / rnam pa** gang gis sam / ci’i rang bzhin can du ’jug par ’gyur zhe na / *P rjes; **P par. See also PVT Nye D88b1–2/P107b6–8 and, for references to this type of classification, Iwata 2011: 213–214, note 9; the rubrics svabhāva, ākāra and ālambana are found in AKBh 415,7–8 ad AK 7.33d.

6 PV D16a3–4/P18a1: phan btags pa’i lan la sogs pa la ltos pa med pa can ... PVT Nye D88b2–P107b5–7: phan gtags pa byas pa dag las* myed pa thob pa ni phan btags** pa’i lan no // sogs pa’i sgras ni grags pa dang bsnyen bkur la sogs pa bzang ngo // ... sans can gyi don nyid bzhed pa na ’jug par ’gyur ro zhes bya ba’i don to // *P lt; **D gtags. pratyupakāra at PVA 107,5; see also MSA(Bh) 17.58.

7 PV D16a4/P18a1: sans can thams cad la snyoms pa ... Śākyabuddhi’s explanation at PVT Nye D88b2/P107b7 goes as follows: mdza’ po dang dgra po dag la rjes su chags pa dang khong khro ba mi mnga’ ba’i phyir / kham gsum gyi khongs su gtogs pa’i sans can thams cad la snyoms pa o //. I find problematic the claim that compassion is equality toward all beings. Indeed, as is suggested in the commentaries of Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, the compassion that here defined has not been practiced yet (PVT Nye D88b3/P108a1: ji ltar de nyid goms pa yin zhe na //. “The [compassion that we just defined], how do we come to practice it?”). Now, in the Vaibhāṣika Abhidharma, while equality is a characteristic of the great compassion (mahākarunā) of Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas, it is not so for ordinary compassion (karunā; on the notion of “great compassion,” see §4.3 below). At AK 7.33d it is asked (AKBh 415,5: karunāmahākarunayoh kim nānākaranaṃ?): “What is the difference between compassion and great compassion?” Referring to the third difference, Vasubandhu answers (AKBh 415,7–8: ālambanaṇa ekatridhāvālambanatvāt //: “[Their] object, since [whereas compassion] is only directed toward one [plane of existence, great compassion is directed] toward [all] three planes of existence.” Take note also of AKBh 415,3 ad AK 7.33bc, where goçara is explained as ālambanaṇa traidhāvālambanāt, and samatva as samatvendrasvavasu samavrttitvāt. Śākyabuddhi himself noted that sarvasvavasu samatā defines great compassion and not ordinary compassion (PVT Nye D88b2/P107b7–8: ‘dis ni* yul chen po can nyid du bstan pa’i phyir thugs rje chen po bshad do if *D omits ni).

8 PVT D16a4/P18a1–2: shin tu sdug bsgal dang bral bar ’dod pa’i rnam pa can ... Explained as follows by
2.3. At PV 2.120ad1, an opponent comes in who believes that the two prayogas mentioned above (§2.1) are inconclusive (anaikaññika). The opponent objects:10

[Objection:] Even though [compassion can be] improved (viññëa) [slightly] through constant practice, nature (svabhåva) [still] cannot be transgressed, as is exemplified by jumping or heating water.

According to Devendrabuddhi, this svabhåvåtikrama consists in “freeing [oneself] from [compassion’s] opposing (vipaksa) [dharman];” according to Manorathanandin, it consists in “going beyond the property, belonging to [mental qualities] such as compassion, [always] being mixed with their opposing [dharman].”11 Transgressing nature, in the case of a given mental series, would therefore mean12 “to consist [entirely] in [a mental quality] such as compassion, [a compassion that is] not mixed with its opposing [dharman] and emerges spontaneously (svarasena).”

We learn from Śakyabuddhi that the opponent introduced at PV 2.120ad1 is none other than the Mīmāṃsaka doctor, Kumārila, of whom he quotes one verse. The verse in question reads as follows:13 “[A person] may well jump as far as ten cubits (hasta) in the air; [nonetheless,]

Śakyabuddhi at PVT Nye D88b3/P107b8: de yang mi skye ba'i chos can nyid yin pa'i phyir ... See MSABh 121.21: karunä duhkhaivyojåkåra, and more importantly MSAVbh D55b4–5/P65b5: snying rje ni sdu sgang dang bral bar 'dod pa'i rnam pa yin pas sems can rnam sdu sgang dang bral bar gyur cig ces damgs pa'i phyir ro //. See also PVA 53,11; 53,12; 53,15. According to the Sarvåstivådin-Vaibhåṣika Abhidharma and Mahåyånnikå sources, only great compassion is possessed with a real salvational efficiency: “[l]a karunä, simple sentiment de commiseration, ne protège pas les êtres; la mahåkarunä est une compassion efficace et protège les êtres de la terreur du Såmsåra” (Traité III.1707). See in general Traité III.1705–1710, and AKBh 415,10 ad AK 7.33d (seventh difference between karunä and mahåkarunä [aparîtrånaparîtrånah]): “La pitié ne protège pas, la grande pitié protège” (Kośa 7.79)). Compassion is thus defined here as a desire rather than as the salvational act itself.

9 PVP D16a4/P18a2: zhe sdu gang med pa ... Note also AKBh 415,7: svabhåvato 'dvesåmohasvabhåvatvåt //. “[Compassion and great compassion differ firstly] in nature, since [whereas] the nature of [compassion] is the absence of hatred, [the nature of great compassion] is the absence of bewilderment.”

10 PV 2.120ad1; abhyåsena viññëa 'pi laṅghanodakatåpa vat / svabhåvåtikramo mä bhåd iti cet ... For the inconclusiveness of the two prayogas, see D51b7–52a1/P58b5.

11 D52a1/P58b5–6: rigs mi mthun pa las 'das pa; PVP 53,17–18: kṛpådes tadvipakṣasankårṇatavyåtikramåḥ.

12 PVP 53,18: vipakṣavyavåkārarasarasparàpratìkramayà sātmabhåvåh. Cf. PVP D52a1/P58b6: rang gi ngang gis 'jug pa'i mthun nyid can snying rje la sog pa'i btags nyid du 'gyur ba.

13 PṬ Nye D116a5–6/P142a4–5: de skad du gZhon nu ma len gyis / mkha' la dom bcu tshun chad du // mchongs nas 'gro ba zhes bya gang // des ni lan btryag goms na yang // rgyang grags btryag mi mchongs mi nas // zhes smras pa yin no //. TS no. 3168 ñ R 9,16–17 (where the verse is explicitly ascribed to the BT): dasåhåståntara-ram vymno no námotputya gacchati / na yojana asa pu saṃkåto 'bhāyāsasatåit api //. Kamalaśīla’s explanation at TSP K826,25–27 ad TS no. 3168/S1000,17–20 ad TS no. 3167 goes as follows: yadi nāma kecid upacåtåsåmvåpa ça haståmåtråvåyojåvatåsamarthaḥ paścåd abhyåsåkaññåna samåśåditagåttålåghåva dasåhåståntåragågåvånaññåhano (sic) jātåh, tathåpi na te yojana ekam api khasåpathåm utpatåtim samar- thåh pratyånasåtenåti bhåvånti //. “Some [people] whose body abounds in phlegm cannot even jump a single cubit in the air; [now,] it is quite possible that due to a series of exercises, having regained the lightness of their bodies, they then start jumping up to ten cubits in the air; [but] even thus, a hundred attempts would not suffice for them to reach an upward distance of one yojana.” It is clear from TS no. 3169 that the real target of this verse was not compassion, but rather jñāna/prajñå, which leads to omniscience when perfected. According to Decourtmanche (1911: 376), the hasta (“average cubit”) is a unit of length equivalent to 0.4794 metres; the distance measurements are easily obtained from the cubit: a krośa is equivalent to 3 835.2 metres, while a
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hundreds of repetitions will not suffice to enable him to reach [the distance of] one yojana.” Now if we are to accept the portrayal proposed by Dharmakirti and his successors, Kumārila here did not deny compassion or its quality as a psychological event. Rather, Kumārila objected to the claim that such mental qualities have the potential to increase through constant practice up to the point where, at the very end of their developing process (atyantapraKarṣa-nīstham gacchanti, etc.), they may form the essence (sāṁbhāva, etc.) of the human psyche. The development of these mental qualities, argued Kumārila, is strictly limited (vyavasthitot-karṣa, etc.).

Of the two examples provided by Dharmakirti to illustrate Kumārila’s position, namely, jumping and heating water, the first is supposed to refute the claim that constant practice leads to continuous improvement of the competence in question:16 “When jumping, a person very well trained at jumping may cover (gnon par byed pa) a certain distance, but not more; [i.e., he does not jump] one yojana, half a kroṣa or even one kroṣa.” The second example is meant to show that even if we admitted the possibility of a constant increase on the level of the cause, the result would still be finite due precisely to the finite nature of the substratum (āśraya):17 “Even when heated [very] intensely, water does not turn into fire, even after a long time[, since it will have evaporated completely in the meantime].” Manorathananidin therefore concludes as follows his explanation of the Mīmāṃsaka objection:18 “Just as there is only a [slight] difference [compared to] the naturally fixed (prakṛtisiddha) [limit of] jump and temperature, so too there is only a [slight] increase [of compassion] but [the mental series] does not become coessential with compassion.” Unless a transgression of ordinary psychological structure is possible, Dharmakirti’s argument must be rejected as inconclusive.

yojana is equivalent to 15 340.8 metres.

14 AtyantapraKarṣaṇīṣṭha at PVA 105,32; parapraKarṣaṇīṣṭha at PVA 106,27; praKarṣaṇīṣṭham ... gacchet at PV 54,5; praKarṣaṇīṣṭham gacchanti at PVV 55,28; de’i bdag nyid du gyur pa’i thugs rje gang yin pa de ’dra ba mthar phyin pa ldog pa med par ’gyur ro at PVP D16a6–7/P18a5 (PVT Nye D89a1/P108a8: mthar phyin pa ni ’phel ba’i mthar phyin pa'o); shin tu ’phel ba’i chos can at PVP D53b1/P60b4; see also note 34 below.

15 Vyavasthitotkarsabhāgān at PVA 106,8; vyavasthitotkarsatā at PVA 106,11, 106,13, 107,3, PV 54,15–16, 55,14, 55,19; vyavasthitotkarsa at PVA 106,14; rnam par gnas pa nyid ’phel bar ’gyur ro at PVP D52a6/P59a4; rnam par gnas pa ’phel ba can at PVP D52a7/P59a5; khyad par du rnam par gnas pa can at PVP D53a7/P60b3; ’phel ba tshad nges pa can at PVṬ Nye D116b3/P142b2, D116b4/P142b4, PVP D53b1/P60b4.

16 PVP D52a2/P58b6–7: mchongs bzhin te / dper na shin tu legs par goms par byas pa can gyi skyes bu mchongs pa na / yul cung zad cig gnon par byed kyi / dpag tshad dam rgyang grags phyed dam / rgyang grags sam thag pa ma yin pa lta bu'o //. See also PVT Nye D116a5/P142a3–4, and note PV 53,21: na hi puraṣo ’yarthaṃ langhanaṃ kṛtābhyaśo yojanam ardhavojanam vā langhayati //.

17 PVP D52a2–3/P58b6–7: chu’i dro ba bzhin du ste chu’i dro ba ches shin tu gyur pa na yang dus yun ring po nas kyang ’bar ba nyid du mi ’gyur la lta bu'o //. Note also PVP 53,21–22: nāpy udakam ekāntam tāpya-mānām dahanībhavati; PVP D52a5/P59a3–4: dper na chu’i dro ba nyid thob par byung ba’i rang bzhin zad pa nyid lta bu'o; PVV 54,3–4: udakatāpavat / kvāhyamānaṃ hy udakam kṣīyata evety asthirāśrayaḥ; Vibh. 54, note 1: na jvalati //.

18 PVV 53,22–24: prakṛtisiddhāḥ lanḥanāt sparśāc ca viśeṣaṃatraṇā bhavati yathā / tathokarṣaṃatraṇāḥ syāt kṛpāyā na tu sāṁbhāva iti cet //.

19 PVP D52a3/P58b8: de ltar na rang bzhin las mi ’das pa’i phyir ma nges pa yin no zhe na //.
2.4. In his reply, Dharmakīrti begins by shedding some light on the specific properties of jumping; an explanation in which he has no choice but to concede to Kumārila the validity of his description. But in so doing, Dharmakīrti spells out the two conditions that compassion would have to meet, in contrast to jumping and heating water, for its maximum increase to be possible, and for his argument to be conclusive:20

If the [improvement that has been] produced [by the constant practice of compassion] required, [as is the case for jumping,] a further effort [to come again into existence], and if its substratum were unstable [as is the case for water, then] the improvement could not increase [by much]. Now a nature is not like that, i.e., it does not fail to proceed spontaneously. [The growth of that which requires a further effort to come again into existence is strictly limited] because the factors (ṣādhana) whose power is occupied with [recreating] the [previous improvement] are [ipsa facto] incapable (asāmarthya) [of adding a supplementary property] to subsequent improvements, and because its substratum does not last indefinitely (niyam). [Therefore,] because the improvement, even when it is [slightly] increased, is not natural, it requires a further effort to be recreated. [But] if it were the case that an [improvement] that has been produced did not depend on a further effort (punaryatna) [to come again into existence], then any new effort (yatno 'nyah) could produce a [new] improvement (viṣeṣakrt).

The improvement (viṣeṣa, phul du byung ba = atiśaya) that is peculiar to jumping requires a further effort (punaryatnāpekṣa, etc.) to come again into existence “once [the factor, i.e., the effort,] that brought [it into existence] has ceased (ādhyāyakānyārttā).”21 Now, according to Devendrabuddhi,22 “the growth of any improvement that requires a [further] effort in order to be produced anew is [strictly] limited (vyavasthitotkarsa);” or, to use an equivalent formulation by Manorathanandin,23 “to have a limited growth implies depending on a further effort [and] having an unstable substratum.” Moreover, that improvement24 “is not at all a svabhāva, [i.e.,] prakṛti, since the existence and cessation of the [said] improvement depend on the presence and absence of [its] cause, i.e., of the effort by which it is produced.” Indeed, a nature, like space for example, does not depend on anything other than itself, but proceeds spontaneously (svarasavāhīn).

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20 PVP D52a3–4/P58b8–59a1: gal te byas na yang zhes bya ba la so s pas khyad par dang bce pa’i gtan tshigs bstan pa’i sgo nas ma nges pa’i lan ‘debs par byed do //. PV 2.120d,–123: āhitah sa cet // punaryatnam apekṣeta yadi syāc cāsthirāśrayah // viṣeṣo naiva vardhieta svabhāva ca na tādṛṣṭa // tatrpayuktaśaktinām višeṣān uṣṭarā prati // sādhānām asāmarthyaḥ niyam cānāśrayasṭhitē // viṣeṣāyasyāsvabhāvatvād vṛddhāv apy āhitō yado // nāpekṣeta punaryatnam yatno ‘nyah sād viṣeṣakrt //. My interpretation of PV 2.120d,–123 is based on PVP D52a6–b1/P59a4–8.

21 PVV 54,1–2: ādhyāyakānyārttā ātmālābhyā punaryatnam apekṣeta. Note also PVP D52a4/P59a2: yang bya ba’i phyir ‘bad rtsol la yang llos yin te; PVP D52b2/P59b1: ‘jug pa’i phyir ‘bad rtsol la llos ... ; PVP D52a6–7/P59a5: yang bya ba’i phyir ‘bad rtsol la llos pa; PVV 54,17: apekṣeta punaryatnam ... ātmano lābhāya; PVV 54,2–3: punaryatnāpekṣayaipa pravartate. Note also PVP D52b1–2/P59a8–b1: ‘bad rtsol gyis bsgrub par bya ba yin te.

22 PVP D52a6–7/P59a5: gang zhig yang bya ba’i phyir ‘bad rtsol la llos pa ... phul du byung ba nam par gnas pa’ phel ba can ...

23 PVV 54,15–16: punaryatnāpekṣitvenāsthārāśrayatvena vyavasthitotkarsaḥ vyāptā.

24 PVV 54,5–6: naiva svabhāva prakṛtiḥ ... <viṣeṣaṣya>ṭvibh. 54, note 4> hetusamiddhānavvadānāsāpekṣatvāt pravrtaṇīrtvītyah //. PVA 106,18–19: tathāpi tasya na svabhāvataḥ // na hi hetusamiddhānavatāpekṣī svabhāvo yuktāh //.

25 Svarasavāhin at PVV 54,2–4, 54,17, 55,1, 55,5, 55,6; PVA 106,19, 106,24, 106,28, 106,29; svarasapavrta-tākṣāpyāmavatā at PVV 53,18; rang gi ngang gis ‘jug pa’i gyur ba) at PVP D52a4–5/P59a2–3, D52b1/P59a7–8, D54a7–b1/P61b7–8 and passim; PVT Nye D116a7/P142a5; D116b1/P142a8; D116b6/P142b6. “Like space” according to Vibh. 54, note 2: langhanaviṣeṣavan na prakṛtiḥ / anyāpekṣatvāt svabhāvasyākāsavaḥ //.
2.5. Let us now consider how a mental quality such as compassion meets this general condition when constantly practiced. Devendrabuddhi introduces the next verse as follows:26

At a given moment, when one has reached a distinctive practice (prayoga) of [mental qualities] such as compassion, [these qualities] no longer depend on a new practice to proceed, but [rather], the acquisition of [each new] improvement proceeds without [any] effort.

Once the practice or cultivation of the mental quality has been developed, its progress no longer follows the model of jumping, but rather that of wood when put in the presence of fire, that of mercury transmuted through diverse alchemical operations, or that of base gold that we refine:27

[Mental qualities] of the likes of compassion[, joy and equanimity], which arise as a result of constant practice, proceed spontaneously in the mind, just as wood, mercury or gold [change spontaneously] due to fire[, to alchemical processes] or to [heat in an isolation chamber].28

Put in fire, wood is consumed; submitted to the alchemical operations (samskāra) of calcination or oxidation, mercury is transmuted; heated in an isolation chamber (putapāka, PVV 54,23, PVA 106,25), gold is refined. At the end of the process, wood will have turned into ashes; mercury will have acquired the power to dye silver (rūpyarañjanasāmarthya, PVV 54,24); gold will have reached a refined state (varṇikā, kalyānasuvarnatā, PVV 54,24 and Vibh. 54, note 8). In the course of the process, fire transforms wood into coal (āṅgāra, PVV 55,2), then into ashes (bhasman, Vibh. 55, note 1); when coal is no longer exposed to fire, it does not return to wood: contrary to jumping, the process never needs be started anew. The states previously obtained no longer need a further intervention of fire, alchemical operations or isolated heat in order to exist: they are obtained irreversibly. Contrary to athletic effort, these agents of change can therefore engage their full power in “supplementing,” rather than simply recreating, the last state that they generated, and they can do so all the way to the end of the process.29 Following this model, the existence of the improved mental quality generated by constant practice no longer depends on a further action of its cause, and therein lies its sponta-

26 PV D52b4–5/P59b4–5: dus gcig gi tshe ’ga’ zhig brtse ba la sogs pa’i khyad par gyi sbyor ba thob nas yang sbyor ba la ltos pa dang bcas pas ’jug pa ma yin gyi /’on kyang khyad par thob pa gang yin pa de ni ’bad rtsol med par ’jug pa yin no / (des na …)

27 PV 2.124: kāṣṭhapārādaḥemādeśa aṇyādeśa iva cetast / abhyāsajāh pravaratante svarasena kṛpādayah //. Note also PVV 55,2–3: tathābhāyāsajāh kṛpādayah punaryayatnānepeśītītvāḥ sthirāsrayatvāc ca svarasena pravar- tante /, muditā and upeksā according to PV D52b5/P59b5.

28 On cāraṇa and jāraṇa (PVA 106,25, PVV 54,23; spyod pa and sbyor ba: two forms of calcination), see the (rather obscure) explanations provided at PV D53a1/P60a1, PVT Nye D116b2/P142a8–b1 ad loc., Vibh. 54, note 5. The puta (or sampuṭa) designates the equipment (yanṭra) as well as the process; see Renou/Filliozat 1985: Il.§1692.

29 Based on the following explanations: (1) PV D52b6–53a1/P59b7–60a1: yang dper na kha sbyar du bzhu ba la sogs pas gsar nram par dag pa’i mtshan nyid can gyi byang ba’i yon tan de ni kha sbyar gnyis pa bzhu ba la ltos pa med pa lta bu'o / de ltar na kha sbyar du bzhu ba phyi ma phyi ma ni gzhan dang gzhan gyi byed pa yin pas na / rim bzhin du sbyor bar byed do zhes bya ba ni nram par sbyar ba’i mthar phyin pa'o //. (2) PV D52b6/P59b6–7: dper na mes shing la byas pa’i tshos pa las byang ba’i yon tan ji tsam pa can gang yin pa de dang de yang de’i ngo bo’i phyir me la ltos pa med pa de lta bu de ni gags byed pa med na / thams cad thal bar gyur gyi bar du phyi ma phyi ma lhag par byed pa yin no //. (3) PVV 55,1–2: teṣu yadā punar vahnyādayo vyāpriyante tadā somadhikam angārādīviṣeṣam adadhati //.
neity. Proceeding spontaneously and having a stable substratum, compassion becomes a nature:

Consequently, the [mental] quality that arises in those [who constantly practice compassion] becomes [their] nature; each further effort that is made after the one [that preceded it] can add [a new] improvement [to this mental quality compared to what it was previously].

According to Devendrabuddhi, the mental quality here discussed is none other than the great compassion that results from an extremely intense practice. But mahākarunā and atyantābhāṣya can only properly be used to define the Blessed Buddhas and those Bodhisattvas who are far advanced in their career. Moreover, the fact that this mental quality has become a svabhāva/prakṛti is due, according to our two commentators, to its durable substratum (sthirāśraya). And as we will see below (§4.5), that property is an exclusive characteristic of the mental series of the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, i.e., of those who decline nirvāṇa or, in other words, the cessation/extinction of the mental continuum. Among those Bodhisattvas, each successive state of the mental quality is as irreversibly acquired (susthita, PVV 55,8) as other words, the cessation/extinction of the mental continuum. Among those Bodhisattvas, those of consumed wood, mercury that is being calcinated, or gold in the process of refinement. The addition, through practice, of successive improvements can therefore last all the way to the final stage where the increased quality forms the very nature of the mind.

At PV 2.126 and 129–130, in order to make explicit the contrast with the examples advanced by Kumārila, Dhammakūti describes the type of causality that is specific to mental events like karuṇā and praṇīṇā; those three verses also show how each successive state of the mental quality is retained and then increased:

And since mental events (buddhi) such as compassion grow out of a previous seed of the same type, how could they stagnate (sthiti) when practiced constantly? (…) Arising out of its own seed, compassion will come to form the entire essence of the mind[, i.e., the mental series], provided that it is not destroyed (bādhyaṁ) by its opposing (vipakṣa) [dharmas] which [also] arise out of their own seeds. Indeed, each preceding exercise con-

30 PV 2.125: tasmāt sa teṣāṁ utpannah svabhāvo jāyate gunah / taduttarottaro yatno viśeṣasya vidhāyakah //. Note the following explanations of tasmāt and svabhāvo jāyate: (1) PVP D53a2/P60a2–3: gang gi phiy brtse ba la sogś pa goms pa las skyes shing ’byung ba’i yon tan yang sbyor ba la ltsos pa can ma yin pa dang / rten btran pa can yin pa de’i phiyṛ; PVV 55,6: tasmāt svarasavāhitvāt. (2) PVP D53a2–3/P60a3–4: rang bzhin nyid du ’gyur te / ’bad rtsol la ltsos pa med par rang gi ngang gis ’jug pa; PVV 55,6–7: svabhāvo jāyate manasaḥ prakṛtir bhavati //.

31 On this apparently untimely reference to effort (yatna), see note 115 below.

32 PV D53a4–5/P60a6: skyes bu rnams kyi snying rje chen po shin tu goms pa yod pa can; note also PVV 55,6: teṣāṁ abhyāsavitāṁ pumsāṁ.

33 PVV 55,3: sthirāśrayatvāc ca; for PVP D53a2/P60a3, see note 30 above.

34 “To the final stage” according to PVP D53a3/P60a4–5: khyad par phyi ma phyi ma mthar phyin pa’i bar du byed pa yin no, and PVP D53a4/P60a5–6: goms pa las shin tu mthar thug par ’gro ba yin te.

35 PV 2.126, 129–130: yasmāc ca tulyajñāpayārvābhāṣyapraṇyayādhyāyāḥ / kṛpādibuddhayāh tāsāṃ saty abhyāse kutaḥ sthitiḥ // kṛpa svabhājaprabhavā svabhājaprabhavair na cet / vipakṣair bādhyaṁ cīte prayāty atyantāśaṁitaṁ // tathā hi mālam abhyāsaiḥ pārvaiḥ pārvaiḥ parasya tu / kṛpāvairāgyabodhādeś citrādharmasya pāṭave //.

36 Note PVV 56,4: vipakṣair dveṣādibhir bādhyaṁ svopattyā vyāhanyate …
Compassion and its role in the general structure of PV 2

As long as the causal complex (hetusāmagrī, PVP D53a7/P60b2) remains unchanged and as long as compassion’s opposing dharmas, like hatred, are not cultivated, compassion generates as long as compassion’s opposing dharmas, like hatred, are not cultivated, compassion generates. It is the immediately antecedent condition (samanantarapratayā) of its ulterior phases, and their “material cause” (upādānakāraṇa). And in so far as the psychological process falls within a dynamic of mental cultivation or constant practice, each mental instance of compassion, rather than being identical to the previous one, tends to be stronger. Therefore, each phase of compassion does not only exist due to the phase immediately preceding it, but also increases relative to its predecessor, until it will reach the climax of its development: its event of compassion, detachment or understanding. With constant practice, [a mental series can therefore] consist in compassion, as is the case for repulsion, dispassion and concupiscence[, all of which also have the power to proceed spontaneously in those who cultivate them intensely].

37 According to PVP D54a3–4/P61a8–b1 and PVV 56,9.

38 upādānakāraṇa at PVP D53a6/P60b1; samanantarapratayā at PVV 55,12–13 and 56,3–4. A notable antecedent to this position is found at MSAbh D79b2–3/P94b4–5 where it is meant to explain MSAbh 131,11 (samanantarapratayā, ad MSAbh 17.63d1 [svabhāvatvāt]): snying rje dang ldan pa’i sams dang sms las byang ba snnga ma ’gags / de dang rang bhzin geig la snying rje dang ldan pa’i sms dang sms las byung ba phyi ma ’byung ste / snnga ma ’gags pa ni de ma thag pa’i rkyen to ] . “The preceding [group of] cittacaitta endowed with compassion [having] come to an end, a new [group of] cittacaitta is produced that has the same nature (ekasvabhāva) as the [previous one]; the previous [group, i.e. the one that] has come to an end, is the immediately antecedent condition.” MSAT D139a6–7/P156b6–7, edited in Maithrimurthi 1999: 403: sms dang sms las byang ba’i tshogs sngar byang ba ni snying rje skye bar ’gyur ba’i mshungs pa de ma thag pa’i rkyen to ] . “Das vorher entstandene Bündel von Geist und geistartigen Faktoren ist die unmittelbar vorangehende gleichartige Bedingung, aus der das Mitleid entsteht.”

39 Based on PVV 56,5: prayāty atyantasaṁtaṁ vipakṣasaṁkīrṇaśaṁtaṁ práktītāṁ / . See also notes 11–12 above, and PVP D53b7/P61a4–5, PVV 55,28. On the vi°/pratipakṣa, see Maithrimurthi 1999: 191; see also Traité III.1242 and note 2 for references. Note also MSAbh 1,11–12 ad MSAbh 1.1 (tānmayāh): tānmayā iti kāryayamayāh, and MSAbh Mī D8a7–b1/P8b7: byang chub sms dpa’ rnas ni snying rje dang ldan pa’i rang bhzin can yin no zhes bya ba’i don to; MSAVbh Mī D6a2–3/P6b1: byang chub sms dpa’ rnas snying rje’i bdag nyid du gyur pas …

40 PV 2.131ab: kṛpaṁkatvam abhyāsād ghnāvairāyahyavirāgavat / . The definition of ghnā at PVP D54b1/P61b7 is: mi gtsang ba la smod pa’i mshan nyid can mi gtsang ba, which is close to Vibh. 57, note 1: aśu-civa[na]gup[s]ā, so that it can be reconstructed as: *aśucivijugupsāla śa ghnā. *Repulsion is defined as disgust of the impure. The definition of vairāya at PVP D54a7/P61b5–6 is: grol ba rnaṃs kyi bde ba dang sduṅ bṣngal dag la skyo ba dang skyo ba med pa’i mshan nyid can gyi chags pa dang bral ba, which is close to Vibh. 57, note 1: sukhatuḥkhayor udvegānudvega, so that it can be reconstructed as: *muktānāṃ sukhatuḥkhayor udvegānudvegalakṣaṇam vairāyaṃ. *The dispensation of those who are delivered is defined as retreatment from pleasure and not from entertaining from suffering.” See also PVT Nye D116b7–117a1/P142b8–143a1 (where *sukha udvegāḥ = *asaktaśaṅga, and duḥkhe ’nudvegāḥ = *apratītaḥ).
2.6. We now have enough theoretical elements on hand to understand why the example of jumping is irrelevant to the case under scrutiny. Dharmakirti spells this out at PV 2.127–128, of which the first verse reads as follows:\(^{41}\)

Contrary [to compassion, which proceeds from compassion itself], the [next] jump does not [proceed] from the [previous] jump, [but] from physical strength and applied effort;\(^{42}\) and since the two causes of [jumping, physical] strength and [applied] effort, have a fixed capacity,\(^{43}\) the [resulting] jump [also] has a fixed nature, [and its potential increase is therefore finite].

But someone may object:\(^{44}\) “if the jump proceeds only from [physical] strength and effort, [and] not from its homogeneous [antecedents], it should already be of such a measure (tavatparimana) before [our] practice.” PV 2.128 answers that objection:\(^{45}\)

[If] this [man] does not initially jump as [he jumps] later after [practicing, it is] because [the weight generated by phlegm, etc., has made his] body deficient; [but] once [that] deficiency is progressively eliminated through effort, [the body’s] own strength [becomes] stable.\(^{46}\)

Let us consider the example of a person determined to improve his ability to jump. Because the abundance of phlegm (ślesman) in his body makes him too heavy (gaurava),\(^{47}\) he cannot jump more than one cubit (hastamātra). But with athletic effort – gymnastics, etc. (vyāyāmādī) – applied over time, he will eliminate little by little his excessive weight,\(^{48}\) and his body will recover its own strength. As spectacular as progress may be while the person’s physical condition and training continue to advance, his progress will nonetheless tend to stagnate as he comes closer to his maximum athletic potential. For indeed, since jumping is conditioned by causes that have a limited potential, it is itself liable to a limited progress. More importantly, since none of the acquired improvements create a solidly established (susthita) basis for ulterior efforts, everything must always be started anew.\(^{49}\)

\(^{41}\) PV 2.127: na caivam laṅghanād eva laṅghanam balayatnayoḥ / taddhetvōḥ susthātakītvā laṅghanasya susthītātāḥ /.

\(^{42}\) According to PVV 55.17–18: yathā kṛpādibhya eva kṛpādayaḥ / tathā na laṅghanād eva laṅghanam api tu balayatnābhīyām /. Compare with PVP D53b2–3/P60b6–7.

\(^{43}\) susthātakītvā is glossed as sāmarthyanīyama at PVV 55.18 and PVP D53b4/P60b8.

\(^{44}\) According to PVV 55.20–21: yadi balayatnābhīyām eva laṅghanam na svabhāvājāyītāḥ (?) tadābhīyāsāt prāg api tavatparimānāṃ syād ity āhā … PVP D53b4–5/P61a1–2: gal te stobs dang ’bad rtos dal las mchongs pa yin gyi / rang gi rig la / ’jug pa can ni ma yin te / ’di ltar goms pa’i dus phyis skyes bu’i sa ji tsam chod pa can gyi mchongs pa yin pa de ltar snar yang ci’i phyir mi ’gyur zhe na /.

\(^{45}\) PV 2.128: tasyādau dehavaigunyaṭa paścādva avilāṅghanam / śanair yatena vaigunya nirastre svabale susthītāḥ /.

\(^{46}\) PVP D53b6–7/P61a3–4: ji srid bgrab par bya ba nyid yin pa phirin pa yin gyi / lhag par ma yin pa de ltar na / ’di las ring du song ba ma yin pa zhes bya ba la khya ma tho ba yod pa ma yin no //. “He will go only as far as it is possible [for him] to go and no further; hence he cannot go beyond that point; [our position] is therefore flawless.” See also PVV 55.26.

\(^{47}\) According to PVP D53b6/P61a2–3: bad kan la sosgs pas bsd mi mthun phyir te / lci ba nyid kyi rgyus ’i phyir ro //. PVV 55,24: dehavaigunyač chlesmadiktraśaṇaṛvāt /. See also note 13 above.

\(^{48}\) According to PVP D53b6/P61a3: phyis kyang rtos rmi rgyis mi mthun pa bsal na lus lci ba med na pa … PVV 55,25: śanair yatena vyāyāmādīna vaigunya nirastre …

\(^{49}\) Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla do not hesitate to hold that the sthitokarṣatā of the jump itself is not established
2.7. A second condition remains to be met for Dharmakīrti’s argument to hold: the substratum of this improvement must be durable enough to carry this deployment to its end. If Dharmakīrti has remained silent on this issue, his successors did not hesitate to show that only Bodhisattvas aspiring to become Buddhas met this condition, contrary to the Hearers and Buddhas-for-themselves. PV 2.198 summarizes the issue:50

And since the compassion [of śrāvakas is] weak, [they make] no great effort to remain [in samsāra]. But [the great saints who are] devoted to others [and] whose compassion is great do remain [in samsāra].

The intensity of the compassion characteristic of those various “anthropo-religious” types conditions the duration of their respective stay in samsāra. Motivated, as we will see (§5.4), by the fear of samsāra and by the correlated desire for a prompt liberation, the śrāvaka – but also the arhat and the pratīyekabuddha – reach nirvāṇa too quickly to be able to develop compassion to its utmost level. The Bodhisattva, on the other hand, is motivated only by his desire to rescue other beings: his own good corresponds to the good of others. To be able to teach the path (or the four noble truths) to sentient beings, he will cultivate compassion to its utmost limit and will consequently extend his sāṃśāric existence. The diversity of motivations therefore determines the duration of the mental series that serves as a substratum for the development of compassion.51 We owe it to Devendrabuddhi to have correlated this theme with the issue of the durability of the substratum:52

If the substratum is durable, [each new effort] will bring the next improvement. If it is not, [then] what nature would the noble Hearers (aryāśrāvakas) ever acquire [through compassion], they whose mental series are interrupted [upon attaining nirvāṇa]? Those who seek the good of the world (jagaddhitaisīn), however, do not have substrata that are rendered unstable by the interruption of their [mental] series [due to entry into nirvāṇa].

(asiṣṭha), a position of which there is no trace in Dharmakīrti and his direct commentators. To do so, they use the notion of manojava (“fast like the mind”), which is the third type of rddhi applicable to motion (see AK 7.48ab and Kośa 7.113, note 2). TSP K893,15–18 ad TS no. 3425–3427/S1080,18–22 ad TS no. 3424–3426: samādhibalaviśesaprayogāl laṅghanasyāṃśābhīr iyata evātyantapraakArsavartītīvam, yathā bhagavato manojava nāma siddhiḥ (TSP, Ye P377b8: rduḥ ’phral) pathaye … na cāsāyā bādhakaṃ pramāṇam astī / nāpy adarśanāmātreṇa pratikṣepe yuktō ’tiprasanāgātī. “We [Buddhists] accept [the claim] that jumping, because it is connected to the particular power of a [mental] concentration, can reach a very high [level of] development: the scriptures tell (pathaye) [us] for example that the Blessed [Buddha] possesses a miraculous power named manojava … Now, no pramāṇa can invalidate [the existence] of [that miraculous power], and neither can it be rejected simply because it is not perceived, for this would be absurd.”

50 PV 2.198: mandatvāt karanīyāṣ ca na yatnāḥ sthāpane mahān / tiṣṭhanty eva parādhīnā yeśāṃ tu mahatī kṛpā //.
51 This can be compared to the general motif of apratisṭhitasamsāraṁvātva (MSAbh 124.23) as it is developed at MSA(Bh) 17.32–33: see Maithrimurthi 1999: 369–370 and, for the useful MSAT D136a3–5/ P153a5–8 ad MSAbh 17.32, Maithirimurthi 1999: 413–414; see also Nagao 2000: 2–4 and Viév ard 2002: 270–271. See as well Shhiramati’s excellent overview at MSAA Bh D63b5–64a4/P75b2–76a3 ad MSA(Bh) 32, and MSAA Bh D64a4/P76a2–3: snying rje yod pas nyā myaṅ gnān las ’das pa la gnas pa ma yin / shes rab yod pas ’khor ba la gnas pa ma yin no //. “Because of [his] compassion, [the Bodhisattva, contrary to the Hearers and Buddhas-for-them­selves], does not stay in nirvāṇa. [But] because of [his] insight, [i.e., because of his penetration of the two selflessnesses, the Bodhisattva] does not stay in samsāra [either, contrary to the Profanes].” See also §4.4 below.
52 PVP D52b3–4/P59b2–4: rten bṛtan pa nyid du gyur pa na khyaṭ ma byed par ’gyur ro // de lta ma yin na ’phags pa nyān thos rgyud rgyun chad pa can rnyams de ’i bdag nyid du gyur pa gang yin / ’jig rten la phan par bzhed pa rnyams ni rgyud rgyun bcad pas kyang rten mi bṛtan pa nyid ma yin no //.
The close integration of this theme with Mahāyāna buddhology culminates in the works of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.53

3. Compassion and the initial impulse toward the practice of compassion

3.1. According to Iwata, Dharmakīrti holds that compassion arises (or rather, becomes actualized, in the sense of the prabhodha of an impregnation, vāsanā) from the direct realization that everything that is conditioned (samskāra), in particular the aggregates of appropriation, is suffering in so far as it is conditioned and thus impermanent.54 Iwata’s analysis rests on two important comments made by Dharmakīrti at PVSV 9,13 (duḥkhaviśesadarśanāmātṛena) and PV 2.196cd (duḥkhāsantānasamsparśamātṛena). On that hypothesis, compassion would result from the direct cognitive confrontation55 with (a particular type of) suffering. Iwata’s hypothesis is not without problem, however, since the direct realization of the painfulness of what is conditioned, in so far as it belongs to the āryas who understand the emptiness of the personality (pudgalaśunyatā), does not account for the arising of compassion among the Profane and Heretics, i.e., it does not account for the initial impulse toward abhyāsa. For them, indeed, compassion rests entirely on the (erroneous) superimposition of a personal being: their compassion is sattvālambanā karunā which, among the three kinds of karunā, is the only one classified as passion (see below, §4).

(1) In this regard, Śākyabuddhi and Karṇakagomin will confirm my hypothesis in that they do not hesitate to gloss duḥkhaviśesa (PVSV 9,13) as samskāraduḥkhata,56 a type of suffering the intuition of which is traditionally reserved for āryas.57

(2) The context of the second comment in fact also plays in favour of an interpretation of duḥkhāsantānasamsparśa as a compassion characteristic of the āryas:58 “If we know [the truth of] suffering [in its four aspects of impermanence, painfulness, emptiness and insubstantiality], the production of compassion that proceeds from prior conditioning is a property of the [suffering] entity [itself] and [arises] without considering any living being. Passion (rāga) [arises however] from the superimposition of a distinct (antara) self [that is permanent, happy and substantial in nature] on something that does not have such nature, since it consists merely in the aggregates. Compassion, [on the other hand,] is born through nothing but [cognitive] contact with the suffering series (duḥkhāsantāna), and not through the erroneous superimposition


55 For example, PVP D84a6/P96b7: goms pa las sdug bsngal tsam mngon du byed pa’i sgo nas ’jug pa; PVV 78,10–11: sannukhibhāvamātṛena.

56 PVṬ Je D24b4–5/P29b1 = PVSVṬ 52,28–53,7: duḥkhaviśesadarśanamātreneti samskāraduḥkhhatānirūpāsanāmātṛena.


58 PV 2.195–196 (with ’viruddhasya left untranslated!): duḥkhājñāne ’viruddhasya pūrvasamskāravāhī / vastudharmo dayotpattir na sā sattvānurdoḥhyi // ātmāntarasamāropad rāgo dharme ’tadātmake / duḥkhāsantānasamsparśamātrenai’va dayodayaḥ //. See PVP D84a4b2/P96b5–97a4, PVṬ Nye D131a5–7/P161b3–7, PVV 78,4–18.
of a self: that is the reason why compassion is not a passion].” Vibhūticandra, incidentally, is right in seeing in this passage a reference to the dharmālambanī kṛpā characteristic of the ārya/śrāvaka/pratyekabuddha), as we will see below.59

(3) Some further arguments will also support my hypothesis. First, the direct realization of the suffering nature of what is conditioned does not appear among the causes and conditions mentioned by Devendrabuddhi (and Śākyabuddhi) to explain why anyone would begin the practice of compassion (see below, §3.2). Also, the context of Dharmakīrti’s comments suggests that the compassion here intended is already abhyāsa,60 so that the darśana/samsparśa to which Dharmakīrti refers could not serve as the cause of the initial practice of compassion. Finally, both of Dharmakīrti’s comments appear in the context of an argument advanced to deny that compassion is necessarily a passion, i.e., that compassion necessarily entails the cause of suffering and the passions (sattvadāna/satkāyadṛṣṭi),61 they could not, therefore, apply to the only type of compassion considered to be impure, i.e., to sattvālambanā karunā. I am therefore inclined to believe that the direct cognitive confrontation with suffering is characteristic of the compassion of the advanced Bodhisattvas and the Tathāgathas who have come to understand the suffering nature of what is conditioned, i.e., we are here in the presence of dharmālambanā karunā, which follows from dharmāśunyatā. In other words, those two comments made by Dharmakīrti do not pinpoint the cause of the initial impulse toward abhyāsa, but rather, they point to that which, due to the universal nature of suffering, makes compassion coexist with any of the thoughts of those saints who are advanced on the path(s).

3.2. Devendrabuddhi, however, identifies five (alternative) factors to account for the initial impulse toward the practice of compassion. Śākyabuddhi appears to divide those five factors into two causes (hetu) and three conditions (pratyaya).62 Based on this analysis, the causes of the impulse toward practice are: (1) attachment to qualities/advantages (yon tan la chags pa las sam)63 and (2) [the quality of being] a living being of a particular type (sems can gyi khyed par

59 Vibh. 78, note 3 ad PV 2.195: etena dharmālambanī kṛpoktā ī.

60 See PV 2.195, quoted in note 58 above, with the following explanations for pūrvasamskāravāhīnī: PVP D84a5/P96b6–7: ‘du byed snga ma ‘jug pa can ī de dag gis snga yang snying rje goms par byas shing de goms pas las phyis kyang brtse ba skye ba yin no īl. PV 78.8: pūrvasamskāravāhī pūrvābhāsapravṛttā. Note also PVSV 9.12–14: asaty apy ātmagrahe duḥkhaviṣesadarśanamātrenābhāṣyāsbaloḥpādaṁ bhavaty eva karunā ī. “[Contrary to passion,] compassion, which is produced by the power of constant practice, occurs due to the perception of a particular suffering, namely, the suffering of what is conditioned, even when there is no grasping at a self.”

61 See Manorathandandin’s concluding remark ad PV 2.195 (PVV 78.10–11): unmālītāmadṛṣṭinām api … sam-mahābāv-amātrenā dayotpadyata ity arthah ī. Devendrabuddhi’s commentary ad PV 2.196cd (PVP D84b1–2/P97a2–4) reads: sdug bsdag rgyun gyi ’dus reg tsam spvyob yul thob par gyur pa tsam nyid las brtse ba skye ba yin ī brtse ba byung ba yin ī / rang bzhin gzhan sgro bsags pas las ma yin pa de ltar na ‘dod chags kyi mishan nyid las bzog pa’i rang bzhin can yin pa’i phyir ’dod chags snying rje ma yin no īl. Note also PVT Nye D131a7/P161b6–7 ad loc.: ’dus reg tsam zhes bya ba la tsam smos pa ni don lhag par sgro ’dogs pa spangs pa’i phyir ro īl.

62 PVT Nye D88b5/P108a4: … ’dis ni rgyu’i stobs bshad do // rkyen gyi stobs ni gzhan zhés bya ba la sogs pa smos te ī.

63 Śākyabuddhi’s explanation does not add anything substantial for our understanding of the first factor (PVT
las sam). The conditions of the said impulse are: (3) the action of other [beings] acting for the good of others (gzhon gyi don la 'jug pa gzhon dag gi byed pa las sam), (4) the service [provided] to them (de bsnyen pa las sam), and finally (5) the personal desire [to proceed with this practice] (bdag nyid 'dod pa las sam).64

3.3. First a few words about the second causal factor advanced by Devendrabuddhi, namely, *sattvaviśeṣa, or “[the quality of being] a living being of a particular type.” Śākyabuddhi interprets sattvaviśeṣa as “[the quality of possessing] a particular nature” (prakṛti’svabhāvaviśeṣa), and goes on to explain it briefly by referring to the notion of gotra (tib. rigs), or family.65 The author of the MSA XVII.34 also holds that the compassion of Bodhisattvas can be due to their very nature (prakṛti), which the bhāsyakāra explains as gotraviśeṣaṭaḥ, “due to a particular

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64 PVP D16a5/P18a3–4. On the fifth factor, see PVT Nye D88b6–7/P10a5–6: bdag 'dod pa las zhes bya ba ni de dag gi byed pa’am bsnyen pa las ma yin mod kyi / ‘on kyang bdag nyid de snying rje ‘dod pa yin no //.

65 PVT Nye D88b5/P10a8a3–4. Let us remember the “classical” definition of gotra as sādāyatanaviśeṣa, “a specificity of the six sensory extension bases,” which is characteristic of the gotra existing by nature (prakṛtiṣṭha, as opposed to acquired gotra, samudānīta). See BoBh D2.4–9/W3.1–9 (and particularly D2.5/W3.2–3: tatra prakṛtisthām gotṛām yad bodhisattvānām sādāyatanaviśeṣaḥ), Seyfort Ruegg 1969: 88 and MSAVBh Mi D2a2–5/P2b1–4.
The fact that Śākyabuddhi analyses this *sattvaviśeṣa = gotra as a cause for the practice of compassion should not come as a surprise, however, for both the MSA(Bh) and the BoBh identify the bodhisattvagotra as the cause of conventional bodhicitta (śāṅketika) and the career that culminates in awakening. Moreover, the bodhisattvagotra is intrinsically linked to compassion since, indeed, among the four marks (liṅga) of the bodhisattvagotra listed at MSA(Bh) 3.5, it is compassion (kārūṇya and ādiprayogata eva kārūnyāṃ sattvesu, MSABh 11,18) that figures in first place.

3.4. Now let us consider the first two conditioning factors mentioned by Devendrabuddhi. The initial impulse toward compassion can be conditioned “by the action of other [beings] acting for the good of others (*parārthavṛtti) or by the service (sevā) [provided] to those [compassionate beings].” By “action” (byed pa = *kriyā?), we must understand the invitation to engage in compassion (snying rje nges pa sbyar ba = *karunāsāmyāvijñāna?), an invitation which comes from “Bodhisattvas who have practiced compassion [constantly].” As for “the service [provided] to those [compassionate beings],” it is interpreted as follows: “Even if they did not invite [him] to engage [in compassion], he keeps company with [those beings] who act for the good of others, he serves them, and because of that he acquires qualities [such as compassion].” The allusion to service is clear: Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi refer to the well-known theme of the kalyāṇamitrā, or “spiritual friend,” which is regularly connected with the complex formed of the two other themes of gotra and conventional bodhicitta. The fact that keeping company with a spiritual friend conditions compassion can easily be documented. While it is claimed at MSA VII.63cd that “the compassion of Bodhisattvas notably proceeds from [the good of others (*krama)] … a friend,” Sthiramati comments, based on the MSABh: “Once [we can] rely upon a friend, Sthiramati comments, based on the MSABh: 74 “Once [we can] rely upon a friend, Sthiramati comments, based on the MSABh: 74 “Once [we can] rely upon a friend… a friend.”

66 MSABh 125.11 ad MSA 17.34. Note Sthiramati’s explanation at MSABh D64b5–6/P76b6: rang bzhin dang ni zhes bya ba la / rang bzhin ni rigs la bya ste / snying rje ’i rigs yod pa las snying rje ’byung ba ni rang bzhin zhes bya ste / “… als ‘Natur’ wird die Anlage (gotra) bezeichnet; [d.h.] als ‘Natur’ wird die Tatsache bezeichnet, daß Mitleid auftritt, weil die Anlage für Mitleid vorhanden ist.” Edited and translated in Maithrimurthi 1999: 414, note 33.


68 See also Maithrimurthi 1999: 268 and notes 153–154.

69 PV T Nye D88b6/P108a4–5: byed pa ste / snying rje nges par sbyar ba’o il.

70 PV T Nye D88b5/P108a4: snying rje goms pa can gyi byang chub sens dpa’ dag gis …

71 PV Nye D88b6/P108a5: de dag gis nges par ma sbyar ba de lta na yang guhan gyi don la ’jug pa mams dang than cig gnas shing de bsnyen pa las de yon tan can du’gyur ro il.

72 This could possibly explain Ravigupta’s allusion to kalyāṇamitrā at PVT D316b2–3/P164b4–5 ad PV 2.34ab, (reference found in Iwata 2011: 219, note 28). Cf. perhaps also PVA 107,5 (= v. 585): smaraṇaśravaṇenāpi kāpādīnāṃ pravartanam / na ca pratyapākārādisavyapēksāḥ kāpādayah il.

73 MSA 17.63cd: karunā bodhisattvānāṃ … mitrāt…

74 MSABh D80a2/P94b3–4: dge ba’i bshes ngyen la brten nas / dam pa’i chos nyan pa’i dbang gis snying rje skye ste / de ni bdag po’i rkyen to il. Compare with MSABh D142b5–6 ad MSA(Bh) 9.76a (dhāranā), where Sthiramati associates finding a spiritual friend with the Profane. Note also MSABh 131,10–11: uttarārdhena (= MSA 17.63cd) yathākramam hetumitrasābhāvāvah karunāvā hettvadhitāsamanantaraprayāvāv samādarāyati. For a translation, see Maithrimurthi 1999: 387–388. MSAT D139a6/P156b6, edited by Maithrimurthi (1999: 403): dge ba’i bshes ngyen gyi dbang gis snying rje kun tu spyod pa gang yin pa de ni bdag po’i rkyen
nearly unanimous tradition, he also tacitly recognized the cause of the thought of awakening, we will be less hesitant to conjecture that together with his spiritual friend, compassion arises through listening to the excellent Dharma (saddhharma): such is the dominant condition (adhipatipratyaya).” Whereas Shirmati refers to the importance of hearing the excellent Dharma, the BoBh says that it is up to the kalyāṇamitra to teach the path to awakening. This is because the spiritual friend is the teacher, the religious instructor, whereas the “novice” Bodhisattva who serves as his attendant becomes his disciple. The master, who also acts as a friend, therefore enjoys the liberty to exhort his pupil to practice compassion, to follow his own engagement as an example, he who is described by our sources as a compassionate being acting for the good of others. Let it be noted, finally, that as in the case of gotra, the theme of kalyāṇamitra is closely connected with that of cittotpāda, a conventional thought of awakening for which the spiritual friend is regularly held as being one of the causes.

3.5. We therefore find Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, and after them Kamalaśīla and Ravigupta, using a motif that had already been given a prominent position in major Mahāyāna sūtras and śāstras (essentially of Idealist persuasion): they present the gotra as a cause for the compassion motivating the Bodhisattva, whereas keeping company with a kalyāṇamitra is presented as a condition for the Bodhisattva’s inclination toward the same compassion, so that gotra and kalyāṇamitra together contribute to the production of the thought of awakening. Dharmakīrti, it is true, does not say a word about those three central themes. But if, as I will attempt to demonstrate below (§5), Dharmakīrti indeed considered compassion to be the direct cause of the thought of awakening, we will be less hesitant to conjecture that together with his nearly unanimous tradition, he also tacitly recognized gotra and kalyāṇamitra among the causes/conditions of bodhicitta.

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75 BoBh D163,23/W238,1: bahuṣruto bhavati nōvyatpannabuddhiḥ; D164,23/W239,16: anuśāsako bhavati / dharmaṇeśako bhavati /. Note also, via negativa, BoBh D7,15–16/W11,4–6: … bodhisattva ādītva eva kalyāṇamitrāṇa na labhate ‘viparītābodhīmārgadaiṣikākām buddham vā bodhisattvam vā / vineya at BoBh D163,16/W237,17 and D164,21/W239,14; BoBh D163,18–19/W237,21–22: … kalyāṇamitrasyāntikād bodhisattvena dharmaṃ śrṇvataḥ …; see also BoBh D165,6–26/W240,7–241,14. On kalyāṇamitrāṇa, see in general BoBh D163,13–165,26/W237,13–241,14 and MSA(Bh) 17.9–16. kalyāṇamitrāṇa is used at D164,26/W239,20–21; kalyāṇamitrāṇamṣevā at D163,17/W237,18–19; kalyāṇamitrāṇiṣevanatayā at DBhS (I BB) 13.21.
76 BoBh D163,24–25/W238,3–4: anukampakaś ca bhavati kārunikāḥ so ‘dhyaṇekṣya …; BoBh D164,5–6/W238,15–16: sa hi paresam ādīta eva hitasukhaiḥ bhavati; BoBh D164,8–9/W238,21: samakārūnya ca bhavati; MSA 17.10: mitraṃ śrayet … kṛpāmakaṃ …
77 BoBh D10,13/W15,12,13: buddhabodhisattvakalyāṇamitrāṇaparigraho dvītya hetuṣa cittasyotpattaye; DBBs (I R) 11.11–13: … suparīṣṭaḥkalyāṇamitrāṇām … kṛpākarunābhimukhandanāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ bodhāyā cīttaṃ utpadyate; MSA 4.7: mitrabalāḥ … cīttoṭpādaḥ … (and MSABh 15.1–2 and 5: yo hi parākhyāvāṃ cīttoṭpādaḥ paraviṇāpānāḥ sa ucyate samādānasāṃśeṣeṣāḥ / sa punar mitrabalāḥāṃ bhavati kalyāṇamitrāṇurodhāḥ / … sa punar mitrabalāḥ adhiruddhaye veditavyah /). See also Seyfort Ruegg 1969: 84–85 and 100.
78 TSP K872,3–7 ad TS no. 3338/S1055,16–20 ad TS no. 3337; see §5.4 below.
4. The “immeasurables” and the Bodhisattva’s career

4.1. In his commentary to PV 1.12, Dharmakirti attempts to establish that compassion is not, or at least is not necessarily, a passion (rāga).79 To show that his argument is supported by Buddhist scriptures, he declares:80 “It is in fact admitted [by us Buddhists] that [immeasurables] like friendliness [not only] have beings as their objects, [but also] dharmas, etc.” In so doing, Dharmakirti refers to the well-known Mahāyāna valorization of the four traditional “immeasurables” (apramāṇa, also named brahmavihāra): friendliness (maitrī), compassion (karunā), joy (sympathetic, “co-rejoicing,” muditā) and equanimity (upekṣa).81 Each of these four apramāṇas, according to the Mahāyāna, is of three varieties: it is named sattvālambana when it takes beings as its object; it is named dharmālambana when it takes dharmas as its object, i.e., the psycho-physical events ultimately constituting the (pseudo-)person according to the Śrāvakayāna analysis; and it is named anālambana, “without object,” when it no longer bears upon anything at all.82 According to the presentation provided by Sthiramati in his commentary to MSA(Bh) XVII.17–18, this threefold valorization of the apramāṇas has two main sources, which in several respects represent two competing, though ultimately converging, exegetical trends concerning that motif: on the one hand, we have the Yogācārabhūmi (and particularly the BoBh),83 whereas on the other we have the Āryākṣayamatā(nirdeśā)sūtra (ANS).84 Dharmakirti’s explicit allusion to this Mahāyāna theme is very important here: first, it establishes the specific doctrinal and narrative context of the theory developed at PV 2.120–131ab; second, it offers a credible exegetical hypothesis about one of the three major features of the theory, namely, the supposed “spontaneity/mechanicicy” (svarasavāhitva, etc.) of compassion.

4.2. (1) According to the BoBh, the Bodhisattva shares with the Heretics (anyatīrthya) the immeasurables of the sattvālambana type.85 Why are such apramāṇas said to “bear upon beings”?

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79 This passage has been discussed by Dunne (1996: 535–540), whose analysis and conclusions I do not share; by Iwata 2011: 214–215, who properly shows its similarity with PV 2.195–199.

80 PVSV 9,14–15: tathā hi sattvādhamādāyālambanā maitrīyādaya isyante /. Introduction at PVṬ Je D24b5/P29b2 = PVSVṬ 53,8: āgamenāpī saṁsāryādayanā āhā …

81 Note the definitions provided by Śākyabuddhi at PVṬ Nye D116a7–b1/P142a6–7: gzhan daq giś kha na ma tho ba med pa’i yid bde ba nyid ni dga’ ba’ o // rjes su chags pa dang khong khro ba’i rgyu’i yul la ’dod chags dang khong khro ba dang bral ba nyid kyi btang snyons yin no // *D gi. On the apramāṇa = brahmavihāra, see Kośa 7.196–203 (AKBh 452,4–454,23), Traité III.1239–1273, Pagel 1995: 36–48, Maithrimurthi 1999.

82 See the in-depth study by Maithrimurthi, especially 1999: 215–273; Traité III.1250–1254; La Vallée Poussin 1907: 258, note 1; Pagel 1995: 41–44.

83 MSAVBh D54b7/P64b4 (rNal ’byor spyod pa’i sa). The passage has been edited, translated and discussed by Maithrimurthi (respectively in 1999: 306–307, 317–319 and 246–255); it corresponds to BoBh D166,1–24/W241,15–243,2 (see also Traité III.1250, note 1).


85 See BoBh D166,16–17/W242,16–17, together with MSAVBh D55a3–4/P65a1–2. Note also PVṬ Je
According to Sthiramati’s commentary to the ANS, it is because “we consider a [pseudo-]entity, the living being, as [truly] existing, and do not know the [fundamental] insubstantiality (nairātmya) of persons (pudgala) and dharmas.” (2) According to the BoBh, the Bodhisattva shares the immeasurables of the dharmālambana type with the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, but not with the Heretics. An immeasurable bearing upon dharmas is characteristic of the saint “who, perceiving dharmas only, clearly understands the metonymic application of [the notion of a] living being to mere dharmas.” Sthiramati’s explanation goes as follows: “Because [an immeasurable of this type] arises after one has perceived that entities are reducible to the mere dharmas of the five aggregates such as corporality, etc., and that what is called “self” or “living being” does not exist, and that [these] five aggregates are by nature impermanent, suffering, etc.” (3) As for the immeasurable of the anālambana type, it is shared by the Bodhisattvas and Tathāgatas, but not by the Heretics, śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

4.3. The ANS and BBhŚŚ associate the anālambanā maitrī with the Bodhisattva “who has acquired the conviction that dharmas [ultimately] have no arising” (anuttarikadharmaksāntipratīlabdha). Acquiring that kṣānti generally (though not uniformly) marks the entry of the Bodhisattva into the eighth level, the acalabhiḥ of the DBhŚ and niyātā bhūmīḥ of the BoBh. It marks the irreversibility of the Bodhisattva’s progression; it is the mark of the Bodhisattva who cannot regress (avaivartika). Whereas the sattvālambanā karuṇā was characteristic of the

D24b6/P29b2–3 = PVSVT 53,9: sattvālambanā prthogjanānām. On the categories of beings who direct the immeasurables toward beings, see BoBh D166,3–6 and 166,9–16/W241,18–23 and 242,7–15, MSABh D55b3–56a1/P65b3–66a2; on the stereotyped formulation of the apramāṇas, see Maithrimurthi 1999: 35–46, as well as Traité III.1239–1240 and 1246ff.

86 MSAVBh D55a6/P65a5–6: sens can gyi dngos po yod par lta zhing gang zag dangchos la bdag med par ma rτgοs pa’i phyir ro //.

87 See BoBh D166,18–19/W242,17–19, together with MSAVBh D55a4/P65a2–3. Note also PVṬ Je D24b6/P29b3 = PVSVT 53,9: dharmālambanā āryānām //.

88 BoBh D166,6–7/W241,23–242,2: yat punar dharmamāttrasanājī dharmamātre sattvopacāramaśayataḥ sam-paśyaṃs tām eva maitrīḥ bhāvayati //.

89 MSAVBh D55a1–2/P46b6–7: dngos po ’di dag gzugs la sogṣ pa phung po lṅga’i chos tsam du zad kyi l bdag gam sems can zhes bya ba med la l phung po lṅga yang mi rtag pa dang l sdog bṣngal ba la sogṣ pa’i rāng bzhin no zhes dngigs nas … ’byung ba’i phyir ro //.

90 See BoBh D166,19–20/W242,19–21, MSAVBh D55a4–5/P65a3, and MSAVBh D55a2/P64b7.

91 See BoBh D166,8–9/W242,3–5.

92 MSAVBh D55a2–3/P46b8–65a1: gang zag la bdag med par khong du chud pas sems can du mi dngigs pa dang l chos la bdag med par khong du chud pas phung po lṅga’i chos tsam du yang dngigs pa med par sems can la phan ’dogs pa dpag tu med par mdzad pa’i phyir ro //.

93 See DBhŚ (VIII C) 64,8 and 15, BoBh D253,8/W367,11, and MSABh 122,1–2 ad MSA 17.19 (Maithrimurthi 1999: 360–361).

compassionate being who had not realized the insubstantiality of persons,⁹⁵ and the dharmā-lambanā karunā was characteristic of the compassionate being who had not penetrated the insubstantiality of dharmas,⁹⁶ the Bodhisattva who has reached the eighth level knows that dharmas do not arise; having realized the two emptinesses,⁹⁷ he no longer perceives any object that can serve to define karunā.⁹⁸ That compassion par excellence, which is concomitant with the “suppression of the subject/object polarity,”⁹⁹ is none other than great compassion (mahākārūnā).

The attainment of dharmaksānti, however, is not the only defining feature of the revolution that occurs in the acalā bhūmiḥ. For the acalā bhūmiḥ also coincides with the suppression of all “intentional effort,”¹⁰⁰ it is there that the psycho-cognitive endeavor acquires its spontaneity, automaticity, mechanicity (anābhogatā):¹⁰¹ “Les membres de l’effort (prayogāṅga) et la

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⁹⁵ According to Sthiramati’s commentary to the ANS at MSAVBh D55a5–6/P65a4–6, the sattvālambanā karunā characterizes the prathamacitotpādikā Bodhisattva, who still does not understand the twofold insubstantiality. On the prathamacitotpādikā Bodhisattva, see BoBh D12,8–14,5/W18,10–20,27 and BoBh D16,20–22/W242,21–24 (to be compared with BoBh D12,13–16/W18,16–21). Some useful information is also found in Braarvig 1993: II.352, note 2 (sams dang po bskyed pa’i byang chub sens dpa’ ni dang po so so’i skyê bo’i dus na bla na med pa’i byang chub tu sens bskyed pa yan chad mos pas spyod pa’i sa la gnas pa rnas so). On the Profane and the production of the thought of awakening, see MSAVBh D3a4–5/P3b2.

⁹⁶ According to Sthiramati’s commentary to the ANS at MSAVBh D55a6–7/P65a6–7, the dharmālambanā karunā characterizes the caryāpratipanna Bodhisattva, i.e., between the first and the seventh level inclusively. Some useful information is provided in Braarvig 1993: II.252, note 3.

⁹⁷ MSAVBh D56a4–5/P66a6–7: mi dmigs pa’i byams pas ni sens can dang chos kyi stong pa nyid la dmigs te / de’i tshe sens dang sens las byung ba’i tshogs rnas cis la yang mi riog pa’i mtshan nyid du ro geig par gnas pas sens can tha dad pa dang / chos tha dad pa byed pa med pas na mi dmigs pa’i byams pa zhes bya’o l/. “The friendliness that has no object is directed toward the emptiness of living beings and of constituents(of Dharma?). [That is to say:] at that time, the group of thoughts and mental factors (cittacaitta) – which have a unique flavour (ekarasa) in so far they have as their characteristic [the fact of] no longer imagining anything at all – no longer perceive distinct living beings and constituents. [We] therefore [say of this friendliness] that is is without [any] object.” Some useful information is provided in Braarvig 1993: II.352, note 4 (mi skyê ba’i chos la bzhod pa ni sa bryagad pa yan chad la bya ste, de dag gi mtshan ma med pa la lhun gyis grub par ’jug pas de dag gi byams pa …). See also MSA 17.18c,d, together with MSAbh 121,23–24 (Maithrimurthi 1999: 360), and MSAVBh D56a2–5/P66a3–7.


⁹⁹ Viévard 2002: 276. This is also the opinion of Śākyabuddhi and Karnakagomin at PVT Je D24b6–7/P29b3–4 = PVSVT 53,9–10: anālambanā grāhyagrāhākābhinivesāvighātānāḥ buddhabodhisattvānāḥ /. “The immeasurables of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who are free of [any] adherence to an object and a subject [of knowledge, are] without object.”


¹⁰¹ DBhS (VII F) 58,7–10: yānip bodhisattvena prathamānām bodhisattvabhāhim upādāya yāvat saptamā bodhisattvabhāhim āraṇhāya yāvat atyantaparyavasānām ity anābhogena parinispadyante l/. Translation by Viévard 2002: 276. Farther, the DBhS describes the Bodhisattva who has reached the eighth level as sarvābhogavigataḥ (VIII C, 64,15–16 and 25–26) and as anābhogadharmatāprāpta (VIII C, 64,16). The locus classicus of the distinction between sābhogatā and anābhogatā is found at DBhS (VIII K) 67,10–19: tad yathāpi nāma bho jinaпутra mahāsāmudrāgamī poto ’prāpto mahāsāmudram sābhogavāhano bhavati / sa eva samanantarām anuprāptaḥ mahāsāmudram anābhogāvahano vātmanḍalilprānto yad ekadvasena mahāsāmadre kramate tad sarvasābhogavāhānataṇyā na šākyam varṣaśatēnāpi tāvad aprameyam anuprāptum / evam eva bho jinaпутra bodhisattvāḥ susam-
réalisation du savoir (jñāna) produits par le Bodhisattva depuis la première Terre jusqu’à la septième Terre du Bodhisattva sont parfaitement achevés (pari-niṣ-PAḌ-) sans effort (anābhoga-gena), de la huitième Terre jusqu’à la toute dernière.” The great compassion henceforth driving the Bodhisattva is a compassion which has, so to speak, undergone a double revolution because the Bodhisattva acquiesces to the non-arising of dharmas, and because the intentional effort that until then directed compassion toward beings and dharmas has ceased.102 “[L]e Bodhisattva, percevant la masse des êtres précipitée dans les quatre grands courants, ayant l’intention de les faire traverser, s’appuie sur le grand effort (vyāyāma) et le désir (autsukya) pour le parfait éveil par le savoir omniscient. Étant parvenu à s’appuyer sur une grande énergie (mahāvīrya), il obtient, immédiatement après, la [huitième] Terre du Bodhisattva immobile (acalā) et devient libre de tout effort (sarvābhoga). Aucune des manières de se conduire [basées] sur la dualité ou les apparences ne lui arrivent plus.” The actions characteristic of the Bodhisattva who has entered the eighth level stand out not only because of their spontaneity and unintentionality, but also because they are uninterrupted, i.e., because of their serial continuity.103 “In that [context], what is the Bodhisattvas’ abode that is free of intention, effort, and any character [that can be perceptually apprehended]? The abode is [as follows:] it is the one that, due to the repeated cultivation (bhāvanābāhulya) of the previous characterless abode, is associated (anugata) with a path [henceforth] proceeding without intermission or interruption, strictly spontaneously (svarasena eva).”

Let us now return to compassion and examine Sthiramati’s explanation on the anālambanā maitrī of the ANS.104 “[Finally,] we say of the friendliness of the Bodhisattvas who have ac-

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104 MSAVBh D55a7–55b1/P65a7–8: mi skye ba’i chos la bzod pa rab tu thob pa’i byang chub sems dpa’ rnam kyi byams pa ni dmigs pa med pa zhes gsungs te / rnam par mi rtog pa lhun gyis grub pas rtso bde dang ’bad pa med par byams pa ’byang ba’i phyir ro / See also MSAbh 166,5 ad MSA 19.38 (Maithrimurthi 1999: 256.
quired the conviction that dharmas [ultimately] have no arising that it is ‘without object’, since [that friendliness] arises intuitively (nirvikalpa), spontaneously (anābhogena), and without difficulty or effort.” This is also the doctrine reported in the BBhŚŚ, of which Lamotte offers the following summary:105 “Les Bodhisattva qui ont obtenu la conviction que les dharma ne naisissent pas (anupattikadharmaksāntipratilabda) cultivent surtout la maitrī sans objet. Bien qu’elle ait un objet, l’élément fondamental (dharmaṇātī), elle est comme les dharma de rétribution (vipākadharmā), oeil, etc., dépourvue d’imagination (vikalpa), ne fait pas d’effort (prayoga) et fonctionne spontanément (svarasena pravartate). C’est pourquoi elle est appelée la grande maitrī sans objet (anālambana), associée au savoir de l’égalité (samatājñānasamprajyutka).”

4.4. The ideological complex developed in the DBhŚ, the BBhŚŚ, the BoBh, the ANS and the MSABh around the acalā bhūmiḥ deserts our attention since on the one hand, PV 2 implicitly describes the career of the Bodhisattva up to the attainment of awakening and the concomitant perfection of teaching, while on the other, its doctrine is based, as we have seen, on the notion of a spontaneous and uninterrupted development of compassion. It is therefore worth asking if this ideological complex is truly echoed among Buddhist theorists of knowledge. To answer that question, let us quickly examine PV 2.198–199 and its commentaries:106

It is not the case that there is no deliverance (nāmuktih) [from samsāra] since [in the absence of a cause], once former [karmic] formations have been exhausted, i.e., once the projective force of the previous act is exhausted, there is no reconnection to a new (anīya) [suffering]: those immaculate ones (anagha)[, however], whose [karmic] formations have not lost their potential, do remain [in samsāra].107 Now since [their] compassion is weak,108 [the Hearers and Buddhas-for-themselves] do not [consent], in order to remain (sthāpana) [in samsāra], to the great effort [characteristic of the Bodhisattva, and therefore do not stay in samsāra very long]; but those who are devoted to others (parādhiṇa) do remain, [they] whose compassion is great.

According to Devendrabuddhi, the “immaculate ones” mentioned in PV 2.198 are, “for example, the Bodhisattvas.”109 Śākyabuddhi adds that among those,110 “the potential of the [former] action is not exhausted, since the result of all [their] provisions [of merit and knowledge] is unfixed nirvāṇa (apraṇaḥtanirvāṇaphala).” Attaining apraṇaḥtanirvāṇa is generally a characteristic of the Bodhisattva who reaches the seventh level: whereas his understanding (prajñā) enables him to grasp the emptiness of samsāra, his compassion for the beings who are caught

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105 Traité III.1251; see also Traité V.1708.

106 PV 2.198–199: nāmuktih pūrvasamskāraksaye ‘nyāpratisandhitah / aksīṇasaṅkāro yeṣam tiṣṭhanti te ‘nagḥāḥ // mandatvāt karunāyāś ca na yataḥ sthāpane mahān / tiṣṭhanty eva parādhiṇā yesam tu mahatī kṛpā //.

107 PVP D84b7/P97b2: de lta na dus thams cad du gnas par ’gyur ro //. PVV 79,10–11: yāvad ākāśam tiṣṭhanty eva /.


109 PVP D84b7/P97b3: dper na byang chub sens dpa’ rnam s kyis lta bu’o //. PVV 79,10: samyaksambuddhāḥ.

110 According to PVT Nye D131b2–3/P162a2–3: dper na byang chub sens dpa’ rnam s kyis lta bu’o zhes bya ba ni / byang chub sens dpa’ rnam s ni las kyis nus pa zad pa ma yin te / tshogs thams cad mi gnas pa’i mya ngan las ’das pa’i ’bras bu can nyid yin pa’i phyir ro //.
in *samsāra* prevents him from entering into *nirvāṇa*.

The great compassion (*mahātī krpa*) characteristic of “those who are devoted to others” (PV 2.199) also suggests that Dharmakīrti was making an allusion to the buddhological theme defined above, in which the eighth level marks the elevation of compassion to the level of great compassion. Devendrabuddhi is even more explicit: that great compassion belongs to those *mahāsattvas* whose highly developed love freely expresses itself; due to the former practice of compassion, which was itself preceded by the thought of awakening, great compassion proceeds spontaneously. Even though the *acalā bhūmiḥ* is not mentioned explicitly by Devendrabuddhi, his description is most likely meant to refer to the compassion of the Bodhisattva who has entered the eighth level, that same level which marks, as we have seen, the disappearance of all intentional effort and the passage into *anābhogatā*.

### 4.5. Let us recall Devendrabuddhi’s suggestive introduction to PV 2.124

At a given moment, when one has reached a distinctive practice (*prayoga*) of [mental qualities] such as compassion, [these qualities] no longer depend on a new practice to proceed, but [rather,] the acquisition of [each new] improvement proceeds without [any] effort.

I would conjecture that the moment to which Devendrabuddhi is referring here coincides with the Bodhisattva’s access to the eighth level, the abode where his psycho-cognitive endeavor becomes spontaneous. From that point on, cultivation is said to proceed intuitively (*nirvikalpa*, MSABh) and without interruption (*niṣchidranirantaravhin*, BoBh). The description of the corresponding *vihāra* found in the BoBh also clearly suggests that it proceeds without intentional effort (*anābhogena*, BoBh, DBhS, MSAVBh), without difficulty or effort whatsoever (*rtsol ba dang 'bad pa med par*, MSAVBh), and spontaneously (*svarasena eva*, BoBh, BBhS). Now if my interpretation is correct, the subsequent set of arguments (PV 2.124–131ab) would refer to the *anālambanā karuṇā* described in Idealist sources. And Dharmakīrti’s arguments as well as the terminology that he uses tend to confirm this. For he is here not content with simply fixing as a condition to compassion the need for a durable substratum (*sthirāraya*), which as we have seen is characteristic of Bodhisattvas alone (§2.7). For compassion to reach its utmost limit, it must also require no further practice/effort (*abhyaśa*/[pra]yatna*/prayoga*) to reaccess the last state attained through its cultivation: it must become nature

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111 See note 51 above.

112 According to PVP D84a4–5/P98a1: *gang dag sems can chen po rgyu med par mehog tu mnyes gshin pa*, which can be reconstructed as follows: *yeṣam mahāśattvānāṃ akāraṇaparamaṃvatsalānāṃ* (based on PVV 79,15: *yeṣam akāraṇavatsalānām*).

113 According to PVP D85a5/P98a1–2: *byang chub kyi sems sngo ndu song ba can gyi brtse ba goms pa'i stobs kyi rang gi ngang gis 'jug pa'i brtse ba chen po …*

114 For the Tibetan text, see note 26 above.

115 I do not believe that the reference to effort (*yatna*) found at PV 2.125 weakens my hypothesis. Rather, I believe that Dharmakīrti keeps with this terminology because he wants to remain coherent: the explicit context of this passage is not the Mahāyāna doctrine, but his discussion with Kumārila. The effort to which he is here referring can easily be interpreted in terms of *(punah)prayoga ([yang] sbyor ba, PV 53s2/P60a3 and D53a3/P60a4) and (moments of) *abhyaśa* (PVV 55,7–8). PV 2.130 (see below) by itself suffices to establish the equivalence between *abhyaśa* and (pra)yatna. Even though he has entered the eighth level, the Bodhisattva has not completed his mental cultivation (*bhāvanā*); it has simply become mechanical, automatic, spontaneous.
Compassion and its role in the general structure of PV 2

5. The role of karuṇā in the general structure of PV 2

5.1. In the footsteps of Dignāga and (first and foremost) against the Mīmāṃsā, the aim of PV 2 is to demonstrate that the Buddha has become and is similar to a means of valid cognition (pramāṇabhūta). To accomplish this demonstration, PV 2.1–33 first defines the nature of that authority. At PV 2.1–7, Dharmakīrti presents (what the tradition will construe as) two (conceptually equivalent but terminologically alternative) definitions of a pramāṇa, or means of valid cognition. At PV 2.8–28, he goes on to refute the two alternative conceptions of a permanent pramāṇa: the first conception, that of the Mīmāṃsaka, being of a Veda that has no beginning and no human/divine author, and the second, of an eternal God who revealed the Scriptures. Finally at PV 2.29–33, Dharmakīrti defines his own notion of authority in salvational matters: that of a Buddha who is omniscient not in so far as he knows the totality of the knowable, but in so far as he knows the totality of the means to salvation.116

PV 2.34 begins Dharmakīrti’s commentary on the property/epithet jagaddhitaisvin;117 here commences, therefore, his analysis of compassion. Devendrabuddhi introduces PV 2.34ab, with a question:118 “Let us accept [that the Buddha] is a pramāṇa of the type [which you just described]; but what is the sādhanā on the basis of which this [pramāṇa] is said to be established?” To this question Dharmakīrti answers:119 “The sādhanā [of that pramāṇa is] compassion, [and] it [results] from constant practice.” Properly practiced, compassion is therefore the means to become an authority in salvational matters. At PV 2.34–131ab, Dharmakīrti demonstrates how, since a virtually unlimited series of births is possible, the cultivation of compassion can grow to the point that it will form the essence of the mental series.

At PV 2.131cd–138, Dharmakīrti goes on to discuss, without any transition, the theme of the Bodhisattva as ēśstra. The master devotes those verses to the first philosophical tribulations of the Bodhisattva as well as to the path to awakening. There he describes the rational discovery of the cause of suffering (the personalist wrong view, satkāyadrṣṭī, etc.), the identification of the antidote to that cause (perception of insubstantiality, nairātmyadarśana, etc.), and the mental cultivation of that antidote120 up to the definitive eradication of the traces of passions (PV 2.137), in short, up to awakening and access to buddhahood/sugatavā. PV 2.131cd–136 thus highlight the Buddhist motif of (two among) the three prajñās ([śrūtāmayī,] cintāmāyī, bhāvanāmayī).


117 See note 2 above.

118 PVP D16a3/P17a8–b1: tshad ma de ’dra ba nyid ’dod mod kyi / de ’i sgrub par byed pa yang ci zhiq yin / gang gis* ’di grub** brjod ce na / *P omits gis; **P ’grub. Cf. also PVV 21,10: nanv idṛśasya pramāṇasya kim sādhanaṁ ity āha …

119 PV 2.34ab: sādhanam karuṇābhyaśāt sā …

5.2. Dharmakīrti’s interpretation of the jagaddhitaīśīn–śāstr sequence is however quite surprising. We cannot but be surprised to find that the Bodhisattva practices a compassion that is typical of the Mahāyāna even before having identified the salvational path and its twofold purpose (his own good, svārtha, which consists in being a Buddha/sugata, and the good of others, parārtha, which consists in being a teacher, śāstrīva). Moreover, traditional buddhologies profess that these mental qualities of karuṇā and prajñā develop in parallel as one progresses through the levels. We can therefore wonder what might be the nature and intensity of the compassion of the Bodhisattva prior to his treading the path commended to him by his philosophical inquiry. In other words, what rhetorical status should we grant to PV 2.120–131ab, to those verses where, as we have seen, Dharmakīrti evokes the principle that compassion gradually becomes the intrinsic nature of the mental series? Are we presented with an argument in favour of a possibility that will only become a reality with practice and with the completion of the path (i.e., in parallel to the philosophical and cultivation processes described under the śāstr epithet), or rather a description the textual location of which would correspond to a “biographical” moment in the career of the (future) saint (i.e., before his identification and practice of the path)? In other words: in arguing that there is a direct causal relation between compassion and the Bodhisattva’s rational discovery and practice of the path, is Dharmakīrti merely engaged in a rather servile elaboration on Dignāga’s sequence, or does he rely on a narrative sequence that is both doctrinally and textually identifiable?

5.3. I am not in a position to discuss all the doctrines presenting compassion as a cause. One instance shall be sufficient. In many Mahāyāna śāstras and sūtras, compassion is considered to be the cause of bodhicittotpāda, the “production of the thought of awakening,” a decisive event that marks the true beginning of a Bodhisattva’s career. The BoBh identifies four causes (hetu) of the thought of awakening; among those, “compassion toward living beings is the third cause of the arising of [that] thought in the Bodhisattva.” Earlier in the same chapter, the BoBh moreover states: “And that Bodhisattva, compassionate toward the suffering beings, produces the thought of awakening, motivated by the intention to rescue [them]. The thought of awakening is consequently the outcome of compassion.” Likewise, MSA 3.5 says that cittotpāda finds its root in compassion (karuṇāmāla), whereas in the DBHs it is said that “a thought for awakening arises in the Bodhisattvas who are turned to commiseration (kṛpā) and compassion.” According to the same text, “that thought [of awakening] has great compassion for its precursor.” Finally, let us follow Kamalaśīla in quoting the Daśadharmanātāra: “Having seen how living beings are without protection, without refuge [and] without shelter, [the Bodhisattva] develops a wish for compassion, [and this continues

121 On bodhicittotpāda and concomitant themes (pranidhāna, etc.), see Dayal 1978: 50–79.
122 BoBh D10,11–14/W15,13–14: sattvesu kāruṇyam bodhisattvasya trīyō hetuḥ cittasyotpattaye /. On the first two causes, see §3 above.
123 BoBh D8,20–21/W13,5–7: duḥkhītesu sattvesu sa kāruṇiko bodhisattvah paritrāṇābhiprāyas tac cittam utpādayati / tasmāt sa cittotpādah karunānīsyandah /.
124 DBHs (1 R) 11,13: kṛpākarunābhīmukhānām (bodhi)sattvānām bodhāya cittam utpadyate /.
125 DBHs (1 T) 11,20: [tac cittam] … mahākarunāpūrvāṅgamam /.
126 Quoted at BhK I.190,16–19: sattvān atrānān āsrāraṃ advīpān drṣṭvā karuṇāyai cittam upasthāpya yāvad anuttarāyāṁ samyaksambodhau cittam utpādayati /. See also Traité III.1711.
through various stages] to the point of producing a thought for unsurpassed, perfect awakening.” The causal sequence uniting compassion and the production of the (conventional) thought of awakening, or at least the resolution/vow (pranidhi, pranidhana) which is part of it, certainly does occur in Dharmakīrti’s own tradition. For example, Kamalaśīla makes several declarations to that effect in each of his three BhK’s, of which the most significant for us goes as follows: 127 “Therefore, for that [Bodhisattva], the promise (pratijñā) to save (abhyuddharaṇa) all beings, [which proceeds] from the practice of commiseration, spontaneously (ayatnata eva) generates the thought of awakening, the aspect of which is to seek (prārthanā) unsurpassable, perfect awakening, as is said in the Daśadharmasūtra.”

In those Mahāyāna śāstras and sūtras, compassion precedes and generates the thought of awakening: it is the hetu, the mūla, the pūrvāngama, whereas the thought of awakening is the nisyanadaphala. But in the BhK’s, that causal sequence contributes to create a threefold schematisation of the path to awakening or omniscience, 128 “To summarize, whoever wishes to quickly achieve omniscience must make an effort with regard to those three points: compassion, the thought of awakening and the (means of) realization (*sādhana).” In BhK I and II, Kamalaśīla borrows a similar passage from the Vairocanasambodhi(sūtra): 129 “An omniscient person’s knowledge has compassion for its root, the thought of awakening for its cause, and [salvational] means for its conclusion (paryayasāya).” In the BhK II, Kamalaśīla explains that passage as follows: 130 “Therefore, those who wish to become omniscient must practice the three following [factors]: compassion, the thought of awakening and [salvational] means. Driven by compassion, the Bodhisattvas will necessarily take the vow to save all beings.” That threefold structure finds a remarkable expression in BhK III: 131 “Le Yokin, appuyé sur la moralité pure servent d’équipement au śamatha et à la vipaśyanā, produit envers les êtres une grande compassion; formant une résolution en vue de la Bodhi, il doit exercer l’audition, la réflexion et la méditation.”

127 BhK I.190,14–16: tasyaiśvam kṛpaḥbhvāsabālaḥ sakalasaṅkārayuddharaṇapratijñāyānttarasamyaksambodhi-prārthanākāraṃ avatāraṇa eva bodhicittāṃ upadyate / yathoktam daśadharmasūtraḥ. See also BhK II, in the Tibetan text edited by Adam (2002: 185): des na rtṣa ba'i snying rje goms par byas nas byang chub kyi sems bsgom par bya'o / 1. This could be reconstructed as follows: *ato mālakāraṃ bhāvayitvā bodhicittām bhāvayet / “Therefore, having cultivated the compassion, which is [its] root, the thought of awakening must be cultivated.”

128 BhK I.229,15–17: thams cad mkhyen pa nyid myur du thob par ’dod pas mdor na snying rje dang / byang chub kyi sems dang / sgrub pa dang gnas 'di gsum la ’bad par bya'o /.

129 BhK I.196,20–21: tad etat sarvajñājñānam karuṇāmālam bodhicittahetukam upāyaparyayasāyaṃ /.

130 Tibetan text edited by Adam (2002: 180): de lta bas na thams cad mkhyen pa nyid thob par ’dod pas snying rje dang / byang chub kyi sems dang / thabs dang gsum po ’di dag la bslab par bya'o / snying rjes bskyod na byang chub sems dpag rnam sems can thams cad mnogon par gdon pa'i phyir nges par dam 'cha' bar 'gyur ro / 1. This could be reconstructed as follows: *tasmāt sarvajñājñānād adhigantukāmaḥ karuṇābodhicittotpāyeṣv eteṣu triṣu śīkṣītavyam / karuṇāyā preryamāṇā bodhisattvāḥ sarvasattvabhūddhāraṇārthām avaśyam prati-jñāṣyanti /.

131 BhK III.3,6–8: tatra yoginā śīlavāsuddhādau śamathavipaśyanāsambhāre sthītena sarvasattvesu mahākaruṇām utpāda, saṃputpāditaḥ bodhibhātenāḥ śrutacintābhedāvāyām prayoktavyam / / Translated by Lamotte 1987: 338 (from the Tibetan!), without the Sanskrit reconstructions.
5.4. Can the Mahāyāna sequence of compassion and the thought of awakening, as well as the threefold structure found in Kamalāśīla, serve as a clavis hermeneutica in our interpretation of PV 2? The initial and final terms of this threefold schema match with what we already know from PV 2: (mahā)karuṇā on one side, the path (upāya, *sādhana, śructacintābhāvanā, etc.) on the other. What remains to be determined is if an allusion to the middle term, bodhicittotpāda, can be found in PV 2. To my knowledge, that important motif does not appear expressis verbis in the works of Dharmakīrti. But PV 2.131cd–132ab would make a good candidate for a functional equivalent to bodhicittotpāda, situated as it is between the half-verse (PV 2.131ab) that ends the investigation of compassion and the half-verse (PV 2.132cd) that begins the investigation of the path and the praṇānas. Let us consider those four pādas:132

[Wishing to calm other people’s suffering,] the compassionate (dayāvat) [Bodhisattva] engages in [the cultivation of] means (upāya) to [calm suffering] in order to eradicate (hāna) [his own] suffering: [for] it is indeed a difficult task (duṣkara) for anyone to [correctly] teach [others about] the goal (upeya) and its cause [when they remain] imperceptible (parokṣa).

Let us first remark that nothing in the direct commentaries suggests any allusion on the part of Dharmakīrti to the production of the thought of awakening. According to Devendrabuddhi’s commentary,133 the Bodhisattva’s practice of compassion means that the Bodhisattva will suffer upon witnessing the suffering of others, and that he will consequently strive to calm that suffering. Compassion serves as the cause for the Bodhisattva’s rational decision that he should himself directly realize (sāksāt/pratyaśikaraṇa) the path and its goal in order to teach them to those who are caught in painful transmigration and thus calm their suffering. That rational decision follows the maxim according to which we can only teach well what we know from experience. That undertaking is rational in so far as the quest for one’s own good (svārtha > sugata-tvā) is subordinate and becomes a means for insuring the good of others (parārtha >

132 PV 2.131cd–132ab: dayāvān duṣkhalakhānārtham upāyeyi abhiṣuyuyate // parokṣopeyataddhetos tadākhyānam hi duṣkaram / yakṣyāgamabhīyam vimūrśan duṣkhahetum parīṣayte //.

133 PVP D54b2–7/P62a1–8: brtse ldan te / rgyu’i gnas skabs na yod pa’i’i nga ng tshul can gyi brtse bas byang chub sems dpa’ sems can gzhan gyi sdug bsngal gyis sdug bsngal bar gyur pa brtse ba la goms par gyur pas de dag gi sdug bsngal nye bar zhī bar don du gnyer ba can gyi sdug bsngal spang phyir de rab tu zhi ba’i thabs rams la ni mgon sbyor mdzad | nyid nyid kyi sdug bsngal rab tu zhi ba dang rjes su mthun pa’i lam rtags par byed pa zhes bya ba’i don to // ... nyid nyid kyi sdug bsngal rab tu zhi ba’i thabs rtsom pa gang yin pa’i nyid gzhan gyi don dang rjes su mthun pa yin no // de lta yin na ... de’i rgyu gang yin pa nan tan du byas pa las de’i thabs las byang ba’i don de gdul bya de dag gis thob par ’gyur ro // ... lam mi shes pas phyin ci na log pa’i lam ston pa’i skabs med pa’i phyir re zhih rtags pa dang ldan pa nyid sems can rams la de nyid dang de’i rgyu ji litar gnas pa bzhin du ’chad par bzhed pas mgon sum du mdzad pa yin no //. *Note Vibh. 57, note 2: na hy amārgaṇo ‘viparitamārgopadesa’ dhikriyate //.”[By] ‘compassionate,’ [Dharmakīrti means:] with compassion as a cause (*hetvavastābhāvānīya dayayā); having practiced compassion, the Bodhisattva [himself] suffers from the pain [infecting] other beings (*parasattvaduṣkhadukhita); seeking (prārthī-, arthī) to calm (upāsana) their suffering, he himself engages in [the cultivation of] means to calm (prāsāma) that [suffering, first] in order to eliminate (hāna) [his own] suffering. The meaning [intended by Dharmakīrti] is that [the Bodhisattva will] practice (pratipad-) a path capable of calming his own suffering ... [In fact,] establishing the means of calming his own suffering is alone suitable to the good of others. In this way, by practicing (anuṣṭhāṇa) the [path] that [serves] as its cause ..., those [beings] who are to be instructed (vineya, vaiśeṣyaka) will reach the goal [associated with that] means (tadupyeṣṭhā) ... [But] a [person] who does not know [himself] the path [to be followed] is not qualified to indicate the right path; therefore, [if he is] rational (prekṣāvāt), the [Bodhisattva] who wishes to teach properly the [path] and its end to others [will] first realize (pratyaśikaraṇa, sāksāt-karaṇa) [them for himself].]
In this rational decision I see a functional equivalent of bodhicittotpāda, adapted to the agenda of Dharmakīrti’s school.

Moreover, I believe that I am not alone in interpreting those four pādās as a logico-epistemological variation on the Mahāyāna theme of bodhicittotpāda. In a segment of his long commentary to TS no. 3337(8), Kamalaśīla brings together all the themes mentioned above: the notion of a rational choice, a quote of PV 2.132ab and the threefold division of karuṇā – bodhicittotpāda – upāyā found in the BhK’s. Here is the passage in question:134

And neither could [our opponent] say the following: ‘A [mental] cultivation that would result in a perceptual knowledge of the type [that you assert] is not possible for anyone.’ [Our opponent could not say this] for he would [then] have to state the reason for [such] an impossibility. (…) Here, since the praxis of a rational [person always] implies usefulness, the reason for not engaging in [mental] cultivation could be that [the mental cultivation of insubstantiality] is useful to nobody whatsoever. (…) First, among the [various reasons supposed to justify the fact that a rational person does not engage in mental cultivation], uselessness is not established. Indeed, fear of samsāra is the reason (nimitta) why those who are limited to the awakening of the Hearers or [Buddhas-for-themselves] cultivate insubstantiality: [their] thoughts being tormented by the suffering of birth, etc., [their] mind being terrified by samsāra, they seek to calm it for themselves. But since [a person] to whom the goal and its cause [remain] imperceptible cannot [properly] teach them [to others], the reason why the [Bodhisattvas] proceed with the cultivation is compassion: having by nature, due to a specific gotra, the good of others as their sole delection, they consider [that] world afflicted with the three sufferings of being conditioned, etc.; and suffering from its painfulness because they rely upon commiseration, they reject [all] self-interest; and considering as themselves all the [beings] who are caught in transmigration, they make the vow to come to their rescue.

In this passage, Kamalaśīla attempts to demonstrate that the engagement in mental cultivation meets the conditions of rationality since it serves a purpose. Among the śrāvakas and pratyeka-buddhas, that purpose is none other than nirvāṇa “for oneself;” their motivation is the fear of painful transmigration. Among the Bodhisattvas, however, the motivation is compassion alone. Being awakened, the understanding that results from their mental cultivation will enable them to teach a path to peace of which they have a “personal” experience. In this way, compassion leads to the resolution to embrace the Bodhisattva career, i.e., it leads to the vow to implement the adequate means to awakening.

5.5. If my interpretation of these four pādās as a functional equivalent of bodhicittotpāda(pranidhāna) is correct, Dharmakīrti’s interpretation of the jagaddhitaisvāṣṭṛtya sequence is easily explained by means of a narrative micro-sequence common to Mahāyāna buddhologies: the practice of compassion precedes and generates the thought of awakening, which marks the beginning of the Bodhisattva’s career as such. For Devendrabuddhi and Kamalaśīla, the thought of awakening is a rational decision in which a series of means – śrutamayi, cintāmayi, bhāvanāmayi prajñā, bodhi – are subordinated to the single goal of taking beings out of suf-

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134 TSP 1054,19–22 and 1055,14–20 ad TS no. 3337/K871,12–15 and 872,1–7 ad TS no. 3338: na cāpy evam śaṅkyaṃ vaktaḥ – saiva tādṛṣṭi bhāvanā na kasyacit sambhavati, yā tathābhāvapratyaksajñānaphalā bhaved iti, yato ‘sambhau kāraṇam vacanīyam, tathā hi bhāvanāyām apraṇyoṣc arvēṣam evanārthāvīm … kāraṇaṃ bhavet, prekṣāvataḥ pravṛtter arthitayā vyāpattavāt. … tatra na tāvad anarthāvīm siddham, tathā hi ye tāvaj jātyā-dhukkhotpiyātmanāsāḥ samsārárd uttstramananāsas taduṇapāśanam aṭmanāḥ prārthāyante, teṣām śrāvakādikābhāvānāya dhaniyātaṃ samsārārd bhayaṃ eva nairātmyabhāvanānīmītām, ye tu gotraviśeṣāt prakṛtyāva parahita-karanākābhārāṃ samsārārādhitkāharātanipātiyam jagad avayeṣa, kṛpāpanantaratayā taddhukhā-dhukhināḥ svāmāṇa vyapekṣāṃ apāṣya, sakalān eva samsārāna ātmavāṇābhavagatās tatparitirnāyā pranidhāhte, teṣām karaṇaiva bhāvanāpravīrtīnīmītām, parokṣopeyataddhetos tādākyānāsa duṣkaraṅvāt.
ferring existence. From an internal point of view, the Great Vehicle is the very expression of that rational decision; from an external point of view, it spells out the general context of that decision as well as its reason, its final goal and the means to its final goal.

We can therefore be sure that Dharmakirti’s causal interpretation, far from being imposed by the restrictive wording of the maṅgalaśloka, rests on a Mahāyāna narrative sequence that is clearly identifiable. Moreover, we can also determine without difficulty the meaning of PV 2.120–131ab: Dharmakirti there demonstrates the simple possibility of compassion becoming the intrinsic nature of the mental series, and not its actuality in a narrative/“biographical” sense. Though the practice of compassion starts at a quite early stage, its gradual and cumulative improvement can proceed only in conjunction with the development of prajñā, i.e., in narrative terms, in parallel with the path describing the Bodhisatta as sāstrī. Likewise, its culmination will coincide with the definitive eradication of all traces of passions (kleśavāsanā, PV 2.137 and 141c) and of undefiled ignorance (akliṣṭājñāna, cf. PV 2.141d). The Bodhisatta will ipso facto become a Buddha whose essence is composed of mental qualities such as compassion and insight (vipaśyanā, prajñā), a Buddha superior to the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas. If, as Dharmakirti and his epigones would have it, karunā is the cause or sādhana of the Buddha’s authority, it is because it is the direct cause of bodhicittotpāda, which in turn is the cause of the career leading to awakening; the latter enables the new Buddha to teach the truths or the path with full authority (PV 2.145–146ab).

6. Abbreviations

Adam 2002 See BhK II.
ANS Aksayamatinirdeśasūtra: Quoted from Śiksā, Traité, etc. See Braarvig 1993.
BBhŚŚ Buddhabhūmīśūraśāstra: Quoted from Traité.
BT Brhaṭṭikā of Kumārila (lost, only in fragments).
D sDe dge Tibetan Triṣṭaka bsTan ’gyur Preserved at the Faculty of Letters, University of Tokyo, ed. J. Takasaki, Z. Yamaguchi, Y. Ejima. Tokyo 1981 and following.
Compassion and its role in the general structure of PV 2

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La Vallée Poussin 1907

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Maithrimurthi 1999

MAVT

MPPŚ
See Traité.

MSA(Bh)

MSAṬ

MSAVBh

Nagao 2000


Pramāṇasamuccaya (ṛṛtti) of Dignāga.

Pramāṇa-vārttika, chapter 1 (Śvārtthānumānapariccheda): See PVSV.


Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya or Vārttikālankāraḥ of Prajñākaraṇagupta (Being a Commentary on Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavārttikam), ed. R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana. Patna 1953.

Pramāṇavārttikāpāṇīkā of Devendrabuddhi: D no. 4217, Che 1–326b6/P no. 5717, Che 1–390a8.


Pramāṇavārttikāṭikā of Śākyabuddhi: D no. 4220, Je 1–Nye 282a7/P no. 5718, Je 1–Nye 348a8.

Pramāṇavārttikāṭikā ad PV 2 of Ravigupta: D no. 4225, Pe 293b1–398a7/P no. 5726, Tshe 137a3–266a6.


Notes of Vibhūticandra to PVV: See PVV.