Agotrastra in the Bodhisattvabhūmi:
The Paripākapaṭala and the Bodhisattvaguṇapaṭala

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1. Introduction

The conception of gotra has undergone an extensive and complicated process of reinterpretation and recontextualization over the course of the long history of Buddhist doctrines. In Yogācāra thought, we can observe an original development, in the history of interpretation of the term gotra, starting with the Yogācārabhūmi, the basic text of this school. This process can be seen in the invention of terms, such as prakṛtisthām gotraṃ, samudānitam gotram, agotra, aniyatagotra.

The present paper deals with the Bodhisattvabhūmi, a section of the Yogācārabhūmi, and focuses on the term agotrastra which indicates the negation of a pre-existing notion of “being located in a gotra” (gota-stha). As for the interpretation of the term agotrastra, Takasaki [1973] proposes that the term was originally parsed as a-gotrastra but was eventually reinterpreted as agotra-stha. Then, Sakuma [2007] examines the passages featuring agotra and aparinirvāṇadharma in the Yogācārabhūmi. He analyses the two ways of parsing agotrastra and the development of the conception of agotrastra with respect to the “five-gotra system” (wuxing gebie 五姓各別). Sakuma [2007] excerpts helpful passages relating to agotrastra. However, I would like to consider here more specifically other passages of the Bodhisattvabhūmi in order to shed new light on the notion of agotrastra according to these sources. These passages are important, because they bear on the following question: What is a bodhisattva’s attitude toward the agotrastra? The object of this paper is to clarify some aspects of agotrastra concerning this question. Let us thus examine the theory of agotrastra in the Bodhisattvabhūmi.

2. The Theory of Agotrastra in the Bodhisattvabhūmi

In the Bodhisattvabhūmi, the theory of agotrastra can be found in three chapters, namely
Chapter I *Gotrapaṭala*, VI Paripākaṇṭapāṭala, and XVIII Bodhisattvagunapāṭala. In the following sections I examine passages from these three chapters which concern the individual called *agotraṣṭha*. Sanskrit texts of each passage are based on Wogihara’s edition (= BBh) unless otherwise cited.

2.1. What is the Role of the *Agotraṣṭha*?

2.1.1. Chapter I *Gotrapaṭala*

First, there are two passages where the term *agotraṣṭha* occurs in the *Gotrapaṭala*. They explain the role of the *agotraṣṭha* as follows:

Passage 1 BBh 2.13–17 (Tibetan), BBh\(_B\) 1.18–20, BBh\(_R\) 406.5–8 (It is based on BBh\(_R\)):

*agotra-sthah pugdalo gotre 'sati cittotpāde 'pi yatna-samāśraye saty abhavyo 'nuttarāyāḥ samyak-sambodheḥ pariṇāraye /

Because he does not possess a gotra (gotre 'sati), an individual who is located in an *agotra* (*agotraṣṭha*) is not able to accomplish an unrivalled perfect Enlightenment, even when he possesses the production of the Thought (*cittotpāda*) and the resort to efforts.

Passage 2 BBh 11.18–19, BBh\(_B\) 7.23–24:

*asati tu gotre sarveṇa sarvam sarvathā bodher aprāptir eva veditavya /

However, if one does not possess a gotra (*asati gotre*), it should be known that he will never, at any time, in any way, acquire an Enlightenment.

These passages explain that the *agotraṣṭha*, meaning “one who does not possess a gotra,” is not able to accomplish an unrivalled perfect Enlightenment.

2.2. What is a *Bodhisattva*’s Attitude toward the *Agotraṣṭha*?

2.2.1. Chapter VI *Paripākaṇṭapāṭala*

Next, there are two passages where the term *agotraṣṭha* occurs in the *Paripākaṇṭapāṭala*. They explain a *bodhisattva*’s attitude toward the *agotraṣṭha* as follows:

Passage 3 BBh 78.21–79.1, BBh\(_B\) 55.16–20:

*tatra paripaṣṭaḥ pugdaloḥ samāsaṭaḥ catvāraḥ / śrāvaka-gotraḥ śrāvaka-yāne / pratyekabuddha-gotraḥ pratyekabuddha-yāne / bhuddha-gotro mahāyāne paripācaityavyah / agotra stho 'pi pudgalah sugati-ghanaya paripācaityavyo bhavati, bodhisattvānāṁ buddhānām ca bhagavaṭānāṁ, ity ete catvāraḥ pugdaloḥ esu caturoḥ vastuṣu paripācaityavyaḥ / evaḥ paripāca-pudgalakeḥ paripāko veditavya /

In these [six maturations], individuals who are the objects of maturation are concisely of four [types]. [From the view point of] *Bodhisattvas* and *Buddha-bhagavas*, (1) the person with śrāvakagotra should be brought to maturation in the Śrāvaka Vehicle, (2) the person with pratyekabuddha-gotra in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and (3) the person with buddha-gotra in the Great Vehicle.
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(4) The individual who is located in an agotra should also be brought to maturation in order to attain a good condition. These four [types] individuals should be brought to maturation according to these four modes. In this way, the maturation should be known in accordance with the individual who is the object of maturation.

Passage 4 BBh 85.4–7, BBhD 60.5–7:

\[
\text{tatragotra-sthānām pudgalanām sugati-gamanāya paripākāh punah-punah pratyāvartyo bhavati punah-punah karanīyah / gotra-sthānām punah paripāko na pratyāvartyo bhavati / na punah-punah karanīyah /}
\]

In these [individuals who are brought to maturation], the maturation for the attainment of a good condition turns back again and again for individuals who are located in an agotra, and it needs to be done again and again. On the other hand, the maturation [in the Three Vehicles] does not turn back for persons who are located in a gotra, and it need not be done again and again.

These passages make clear that the Bodhisattva brings to maturation four types of individuals, namely Śrāvaka, Pratyekabuddha, Bodhisattva, and agotrastha. Among these, the Bodhisattva brings to maturation the agotrastha for the purpose of the attainment of a good condition (sugati).

2.2.2. Chapter XVIII Bodhisattvagunapātala

Finally, there is one passage regarding agotrastha in the explanation of five immeasurable things (aprameya) of the Bodhisattvagunapātala. There, passages concerning the element of living beings (sattva-dhātu) and the element of persons who should be trained as Buddhists (vineya-dhātu) are important in explaining a bodhisattva's attitude toward the agotrastha.

In the passage on the element of living beings, the element of living beings comprises the 64 sorts of living beings grouped togethe in the Manobhūmi. 1) In the passage about persons who should be trained as Buddhists, persons who should be trained as Buddhists are distinguished from 1 to 10 sorts, enumerated with 55 aspects (ākāra). In this enumeration, it is said that all living beings (sarva-sattva) are persons who should be trained as Buddhists. 2) Then, there is the following passage concerning the difference between the element of living beings and the element of persons who should be trained as Buddhists.

Passage 5 BBh 296.3–6, BBhD 200.23–201.3, BBhE 92:

\[
\text{tatra sattva-dhātu-vineya-dhātvoh kīṃ nānā-karaṇam / sattva-dhātur aviseṣeṇa sarva-sattvā gotra-sthā agotra-sthās ca / ye punar gotra-sthā eva tāsu tāsv avasthāsu vartante / sa vineya-dhātur ity ucyate /}
\]

In these [five immeasurable things], is there any difference between the element of living beings

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(sattva-dhātu) and the element of persons who should be trained [as Buddhists] (vineya-dhātu)? The element of living beings is, without a special distinction, all living beings (sarva-sattva), [namely] persons who are located in a gotra and persons who are located in an agotra. On the other hand, only persons who are located in a gotra being in each state are said to be the element of persons who should be trained [as Buddhists].

This passage also explains a bodhisattva's attitude toward the agotrastha. As for the element of living beings, there is no special distinction between persons located in a gotra (gotra-stha) and agotrasthas. But the element of persons who should be trained as Buddhists only consists of persons located in a gotra. Therefore, those who are agotrastha are specifically excluded from the object of Buddhist training, though this chapter (BBh 295.7–8) also says that the element of persons who should be trained as Buddhists is all living beings.

3. Conclusion

Through the examination of the theory of agotrastha in the Bodhisattvabhūmi, this paper clarifies that, the agotrastha is not able to accomplish an unrivalled perfect Enlightenment (according to the Gotrapaṭala). This has been pointed out by earlier scholars. Additionally, this paper sheds the following new light on agotrastha, namely a bodhisattva's attitude toward the agotrastha: Importantly, he is ruled out as the object of Buddhist training. However, he is brought to maturation by the Bodhisattva for the purpose of the attainment a good condition. Because of these two attitudes, the Bodhisattva would not ignore the agotrastha, even though there is a distinction concerning living beings by maturation (according to the Paripākapaṭala) and Buddhist training (according to the Bodhisattvagunaṭpaṭala).

(Notes)
1) BBh 295.2–3, BBhβ 200.7–8, BBhγ 82: The element of living beings is the 64 [sorts] of living beings, for instance [the statement] in the Manobhūmi. (catuḥ-ṣaṣṭiḥ sattva-nikāyāḥ sattva-dhātus tad-yathā mano-mayāṁ bhūmau)
2) BBh 295.7–8, BBhβ 200.11, BBhγ 84: Because all living beings should be trained [as Buddhists], person who should be trained [as Buddhists] would be 1 sort. (syād eka-vidho vineyāḥ sarva-sattvā vineyā iti kṛtvā)

(Primary Literatures and Abbreviations)
BBh Bodhisattvabhūmi. U. Wogihara, ed. Bodhisattvabhūmi: A Statement of Whole Course of the
Agotrastha in the Bodhisattvabhūmi (E. OKADA)


〈Secondary Literatures〉


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