The Development of the Five-Gotra Theory in the Yogācāra School:

In Accordance with the Sūtra Commentaries

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1. Introduction

By employing the term *gotra*, the Yogācāra school discusses the topics such as the possibility of reaching *parinirvāṇa* and the types of enlightenment (*bodhi*). The Faxiang zong, founded by Xuanzang 玄奘, enumerated five *gotras*, that is, *śrāvaka-gotra*, *pratyekabuddha-gotra*, *bodhisattva-gotra* (or, according to the *Yogācārabhūmi*, *bodhisattva-gotra* is also called *tathāgata-gotra*, *buddha-gotra*, *mahāyāna-gotra*), *aniyata-gotra*, and *a-gotra*, and established the so-called *wuxing gebie* 五姓各別 theory. Sakuma [2007] has investigated the origins of the *wuxing gebie* theory in Indian Buddhist texts. His investigation revealed that the five-*gotra* theory is found in the *Sūtrālaṃkāra-vṛttibhāṣya* attributed to Sthiramati, and based on this finding he argued that the Yogācāra school did not particularly pay attention to this theory. However, except for some commentaries on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, he did not investigate those Indian Buddhist texts which exist only in Tibetan translation.

This paper focuses on the Sūtra commentaries of the Yogācāra school which exist only in Tibetan translation namely, Asaṅga's *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti*, Vasubandhu's *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā*, and especially the *Āryākṣayamatīnirdeśa-ṭīkā* attributed to some Yogācāra master who lived after Sthiramati. By examining the five-*gotra* theory described in these commentaries, I argue that the Yogācāra school did pay attention to the five-*gotra* theory and developed it.

2. The *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti* and the *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā*

Before examination of the development of the five-*gotra* theory in the Yogācāra school,

(176) The Development of the Five-Gotra Theory in the Yogācāra School (OKADA)

in this section I briefly explain how this theory was established.¹⁾ The *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti* of Asaṅga and the *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā* of Vasubandhu are particularly important in this context.

Concerning the object of Buddhist training (*vineya*),²⁾ the *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti* comments that a person who does not possess any qualification (*skal ba dañ mi ldan pa*, **abhavya*) is a person who possesses the indeterminate *gotra* (*rigs ma nges pa*, **aniyata-gotra*), and a person who possesses a qualification (*skal ba dañ ldan pa*, **bhavya*) is a person who possesses one of the *gotras* within the three vehicles. His commentary also mentions Buddhist training for a person who possesses the indeterminate *gotra*.³⁾ Therefore, Asaṅga maintains four types of *gotra*, and he does not discuss a person who does not possess any *gotra*. In contrast, the *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā* comments that a person who does not possess any qualification is a person who does not possess any *gotra* (*rigs med pa*, **a-gotra*). The rest of his commentary is almost the same as the *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti*.⁴⁾ Therefore, Vasubandhu maintains five types of *gotras*.

According to both commentaries, we can trace the origin of the five-*gotra* theory in the context of the object of Buddhist training in the *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā* of Vasubandhu, which he developed based on Asaṅga.

3. The *Āryākṣayamatīrdeśa-ṭīkā*

The *Āryākṣayamatīrdeśa-ṭīkā* is written from the viewpoint of the Yogācāra school and it cites many texts of this school. As Braarvig [1993: II, lcxvii–cxxx] has pointed out, this commentary quotes not only from Vasubandhu's works but also from Sthiramati's works. Consequently, this text is attributed to some Yogācāra master after Sthiramati. In this commentary, the description of the five-*gotra* theory is as follows:

ANṬ (Tib.) D 111a2–5, P 135b1–6:

ñes pa dañ ma ñes pa źes bya ba la sogs pa la rigs rnam ^(P 135b2) pa lña ste / ñan thos kyi rigs can dañ /ⁱ⁾ rañ sañs rgyas kyi rigs can dañ / theg pa chen po'i rigs can dañ / rigs ma ñes pa dañ / rigs med pa'o //

de la rigs med pa'i gañ ^(D 111a3) zag ^(P 135b3) rñams ni ñes pa ste / de dag tu thams cad duⁱⁱ⁾ 'khor bar gnas par gdon mi za ba'i phyir ro // theg pa gsum du ñes pa'i rigs can ni ma ñes pa ste / dge ba'i bśes gñen gyi rkyen gyis mya ^(P 135b4) ñan las 'das par yañ 'gyur bas na khams gsum du gnas par ñes pa ^(D 111a4) med pa'i phyir ro //

yañ na rigs can rnam pa gsum ni ñes pa ste / rañ rañ gi theg pa la brten nas ^(P 135b5) 'bras bu thob

par gdon mi za ba'i phyir ro // ma ñes pa'i rigs can ni ma ñes pa ste / dge ba'i bśes gñen gyi
 rkyen gyis theg pa gar btsud par 'jug ciñ / dge ^(D 111a5) ba'i bśes gñen ^(P 135b6) dañ ma phrad na /
 mya ñan las 'das par 'gyur bar chadⁱⁱⁱ⁾ pa med pa'i phyir ro //

i) om. P, ii) om. P, iii) tshad P

Regarding **those who are is determined, those who are not determined (**niyatāniyata*)**, and so on, the *gotra* is of five kinds, [namely,] a person who possesses the *gotra* of the *śrāvaka*, the *gotra* of the *pratyekabuddha*, the *gotra* of the *mahāyāna*, the indeterminate *gotra*, and a person who does not possess any *gotra*.

In these [five *gotras*], persons who do not possess any *gotra* are determined. This is because, in all cases, they are determined to stay in *saṃsāra*. A person who possesses [one of] the determinate *gotras* within the three vehicles is undetermined. This is because he will also reach *nirvāṇa* by virtue of a good friend, therefore he is undetermined whether he stays in three realms or not.

Moreover, a person who possesses [one of] three kinds of *gotras* is determined. This is because he is determined to attain a particular result based on each vehicle. A person who possesses the indeterminate *gotra* is undetermined. This is because even though he is led to one of the vehicles by virtue of a good friend and is initiated into the vehicle, if he does not meet a good friend, there is no destruction at reaching *nirvāṇa*.

Thus, the *Āryākṣayamatīnirdeśa-ṭīkā* comments that the *gotra* is of five kinds. Regarding the topic (*ñes pa dañ ma ñes pa*, **niyatāniyata*), this commentary first refers to a person who does not possess any *gotra* and a person who possesses one of the *gotras* within the three vehicles. Then the commentator mentions a person who possesses one of the *gotras* within the three vehicles and a person who possesses the indeterminate *gotra*. The difference in these perspectives is what is meant by “determinate” (*ñes pa*, **niyata*), which is the topic of this commentary. Furthermore, since this commentary mentions five *gotras* in another place,⁵⁾ it can be said that this commentary maintains five types of *gotras*. This suggests that the five-*gotra* theory in the Yogācāra school was developed even after Vasubandhu and Sthiramati.

4. Conclusion

The five-*gotra* theory is established in the lineage from Asaṅga to Vasubandhu, and as the previous study has pointed out, this theory is found in the work attributed to Sthiramati. Through the examination of the description of the five-*gotra* theory in the *Sūtra* commentaries, this paper clarifies that the description of the five-*gotra* theory is also found in the *Āryākṣayamatīnirdeśa-ṭīkā*, and that this theory was developed in the

(178) The Development of the Five-Gotra Theory in the Yogācāra School (OKADA)

Yogācāra school after Vasubandhu and Sthiramati.

Notes

1) Detailed contents concerning the establishment of the five-gotra theory in Yogācāra school are expected to be published this year (2016) in the *Mikkyō bunka* 密教文化 [Journal of esoteric Buddhism] 235 or 236.

2) See Okada [2013] [2014] for the relationship between the object of Buddhist training and the concept of gotra.

3) BuAV (Tib.) D 14a5–b1, P 17a3–7, (Jpn. trans.) Nakamikado [2010: 77].

4) BuAṬ (Tib.) D 58a1–3, P 72a8–b4, (Jpn. trans.) Nakamikado [2008: 124].

5) ANṬ (Tib.) D 145a5–6, P 177b4–5.

Primary Literatures and Abbreviations

ANṬ *Āryākṣayamatīnirdeśa-ṭīkā*. (Tib.) D (no. 3994) ci 1a1–269a7, P [vol. 104] (no. 5495) ci 1a1–343a7.

BuAṬ *Buddhānusmṛti-ṭīkā* of Vasubandhu. (Tib.) D (no. 3987) ngi 55b3–63b5, P [vol. 104] (no. 5487) ngi 69a6–79b8.

BuAV *Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti* of Asaṅga. (Tib.) D (no. 3982) ngi 11b5–15a6, P [vol. 104] (no. 5482) ngi 14a1–18b1.

Tib. Tibetan translation.

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The Development of the Five-*gotra* Theory in the Yogācāra School (OKADA) (179)

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