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 antyata-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-vṛttiḥāṣya 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-ṭikā, and especially the Āryākṣayamatinirdeśa-ṭikā 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-ṭikā

Before examinationing the development of the five-gotra theory in the Yogācāra school,
in this section I briefly explain how this theory was established. The \textit{Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti} of Asaṅga and the \textit{Buddhānusmṛti-tīkā} of Vasubandhu are particularly important in this context.

Concerning the object of Buddhist training (\textit{vineya}), the \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{gotras} within the three vehicles. His commentary also mentions Buddhist training for a person who possesses the indeterminate \textit{gotra}. Therefore, Asaṅga maintains four types of \textit{gotra}, and he does not discuss a person who does not possess any \textit{gotra}. In contrast, the \textit{Buddhānusmṛti-tīkā} comments that a person who does not possess any qualification is a person who does not possess any \textit{gotra} (rigs med pa, *a-gotra). The rest of his commentary is almost the same as the \textit{Buddhānusmṛti-vṛtti}. Therefore, Vasubandhu maintains five types of \textit{gotras}.

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

\textbf{3. The Āryāksayamatirinirdesa-tīkā}

The Āryāksayamatirinirdesa-tīkā is written from the viewpoint of the Yogācāra school and it cites many texts of this school. As Braarvig [1993: II, lcxvii–cxxxx] 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-\textit{gotra} theory is as follows:

\textit{ANT} (Tib.) D 111a2–5, P 135b1–6:

\begin{verbatim}
ñes pa dañ ma ñes pa žes bya ba la sogs pa la rigs rnam (p. 135b2) pa lha ste / ſan thos kyi rigs can dañ /0 rañ sain sgyas 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) rnam s ni ñes pa ste / de dag tu thams cad du/0 '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 bses gnem gyi rkyen gyis mya (p. 135b4) ñan las 'das par yan 'gyur bas na khamgs 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
\end{verbatim}
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par gdon mi za ba’i phyir ro // ma ṇes pa’i rigs can ni ma ṇes pa ste / dge ba’i bṣes gñen gyi rkyen gvis theg pa gar btsud par ’jug cik / dge (D 111a5) ba’i bṣes gñen (P 139b6) dam ma phrad na / mya ṇan las ’das par ’gyur bar chad[iii] pa med pa’i phyir ro //


Regarding those who are 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 samsāra. 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 Āryaśayamatinirdesā-ṭikā comments that the gotra is of five kinds. Regarding the topic (ṇes pa daṅ ma ṇes 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” (ṇes pa, *niyata), which is the topic of this commentary. Futhermore, since this commentary mentions five gotras in another place, 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 Āryaśayamatinirdesā-ṭikā, and that this theory was developed in the
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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) BuAT (Tib.) D 58a1–3, P 72a8–b4, (Jpn. trans.) Nakamikado [2008: 124].
5) ANT (Tib.) D 145a5–6, P 177b4–5.

Primary Literatures and Abbreviations
ANT  Āryākṣayamatirdeśa-tīkā. (Tib.) D (no. 3994) ci 1a1–269a7, P [vol. 104] (no. 5495) ci 1a1–343a7.
BuAT  Buddhānusmṛti-tīkā 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.

Secondary Literatures

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