Ālayavijñāna in the Prajñāpāramitopadeśa

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0. Introduction

In this paper, I would like to provide further clarification of the notion of the ālayavijñāna (store consciousness), which has hardly been mentioned after Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660) in the history of Indian Buddhism. I will examine how the ālayavijñāna is interpreted and what role it plays in the Prajñāpāramitopadeśa (PPU) which is one of Ratnākaraśānti’s main works. In the PPU, Ratnākaraśānti (ca. 10c.–11c.) interprets the ālayavijñāna in accord with the traditional Yogācāra school’s interpretations. However, we can find some original thoughts in these interpretations of the PPU.

1. The Annotation of the TrK k. 5a in the PPU

In the PPU, the sections in which the ālayavijñāna is discussed as subject matters is found in Katsura’s (1976) synopsis 3.4.2, which refers to the connection of abhūtaparikalpa (unreal imagination) and the eight vijñānas. It is also found in Katsura’s synopsis 3.4.4, which refers to the pravṛtti (appearance) of the eight vijñānas. However, most interpretations of the ālayavijñāna in these sections are based upon the interpretations of the Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (MSA), Madhyāntavibhāga, Laṅkāvatārasūtra, Triṃśikābhāṣya (TrK), Triṃśikābhāṣya (TrBh), and the Pañcaskandhakaviṇībhaṣā. Though these interpretations are not directly influenced by any particular texts, they are considered to be the reconstruction of the positions established by the traditional Yogācāra school. We are unable to find his remarkable originality in the PPU. However, We can find in the later part of Katsura’s synopsis 3.4.4, the annotation of the TrK k. 5a in the PPU being different from that found in the TrBh.

1.1. Understanding to the TrK k. 5a

To begin with, the content of the TrK k. 5a is as follows:
Hayashima (2010) showed that the TrBh interprets the TrK k. 5a within the context of the transmutation of the basis (āśraya-parāvṛtti/parivṛtti), giving the following three reasons:

[1] Like the annotations of k. 29, the TrBh commented on k. 5a because it clearly mentions the transmutation of the basis (āśraya-parāvṛtti). 3)

[2] The context of the transmutation of the basis (āśraya-parivṛtti) in the Bodhisattvabhaṭṭāmi (BBh) is consistent with the annotations of the TrK k. 5a in the TrBh. 4)

[3] The transmutation of the basis is represented by the term vyāvṛtti in the MSA. 5)

Due to vyāvṛtti in the TrK k. 5a which is understood within the context of the transmutation of the basis (āśraya-parāvṛtti/parivṛtti), we have two kinds of transmutation of the basis given in k. 5a and k. 29 of the TrK. In regard to this point, Hayashima (2010) inferred that tasya vyāvṛttiḥ means transmutation as “removal,” and āśrayaparāvṛtti means that as “obtaining,” although both denote transmutation of the basis. In other words, in the TrBh, tasya vyāvṛttiḥ is interpreted as the transmutation of the basis, however this transmutation of the basis is quite different from āśrayaparāvṛtti.

1.2. The TrK k. 5a in the PPU

However, the PPU definitely states that tasya vyāvṛttiḥ means āśrayaparāvṛtti. With regard to the section of this interpretation, after discussing the pravṛtti of the eight viśṇūnas (Katsura’s synopsis 3.4.4), the PPU changes the subject matter to the way of obtaining nirvāṇa. The PPU mentions the nirvāṇa of the śrāvaka, pratye kabuddha, and bodhisattva. It is explained that the śrāvaka and pratye kabuddha become the arhat, after removing defilements (kleśa) in the path of insight (darśana-mārga) and the latent negative tendencies (anusāya) in the path of cultivation (bhāvanā-mārga). On the other hand, the nirvāṇa of the bodhisattva is explained as follows: 6)

The bodhisattva becomes a tathāgata, arhat, and samyaksambodhi, after he properly eliminates the vāsanās (impressions) of the kleśa-āvaraṇa (afflictive obstructions) and jñeya-āvaraṇa (cognitive obstructions) that were already removed at the ten stages (daśabhumī). In the stages of the three kinds of arhats (i.e., śrāvaka, pratye kabuddha, and bodhisattva) the ālayavijnāna is transmuted (vyāvṛt).
The quotation states that the bodhisattva becomes an arhat after the destruction of the vāsanās of kleśa-āvaraṇa and jñeyā-āvaraṇa throughout the ten stages. In the stage of the arhat, the ālayavijñāna is transmuted (vyāvṛtti). With regard to the question of “what the transmutation (vyāvṛtti) of the ālayavijñāna is,” the PPU mentions the TrK k. 5 again as follows: 7)

What is tasya vyāvṛttih? [It is] āśrayaparāvṛtti. The basis which is marked by the mind continuum (cittasantaṇa) disappears (nivṛtti) as the defiled parts and appears (pravṛtti) as the pure parts [extending] up to [the extent of] space. On that occasion [that the ālayavijñāna is transmuted (vyāvṛtti)], the vāsanās which are the seeds (bīja) of all the defiled factors (dharma) are removed entirely, so the nature of the basis that holds it (vāsanā), namely the ālayavijñāna, is abandoned. Then the basis is called the uncontaminated basis (anāsravadhātu) and it has a single flavor (ekarasa) like space. Moreover, all the defiled factors (dharmas) do not appear, because the seeds are destroyed. Furthermore, it is also called the liberated body (vimuktikāya), because the viññānas that appear as the foundation, enjoyment, and body do not arise due to the elimination of the seeds.

The PPU states that tasya vyāvṛttih is āśrayaparāvṛtti, and at the time that the ālayavijñāna is transmuted (vyāvṛtti), the basis is no longer the ālayavijñāna. The basis is then called the uncontaminated base (anāsravadhātu) and the liberated body (vimuktikāya). After this sentence, the PPU refers to the relationship between the vimuktikāya and the dharmakāya, that the Buddha and Bhagavat are not different from the Āśrama and pratyekabuddha from the viewpoint of the vimuktikāya, but different from the viewpoint of the dharmakāya.

2. The Construction of the Transmutation of the Basis in the PPU, TrBh, and MSA

With regard to the relationship between tasya vyāvṛttih and āśrayaparāvṛtti, one should pay attention to the examples where parāvṛtti (parāvṛtti) in the MSA 8) is found to be replaced with vyāvṛtti when it mentions the transmutation of the basis. Sakuma (1996) showed that the construction of the transmutation of the basis in the MSA can be expressed with the formula “A parāvṛttau B labhyate.” 9) This formula shows the construction of the transmutation of the basis in the MSA which is the removal (parāvṛtti or vyāvṛtti) of negative elements and obtaining (vlabh) of positive elements. On the other hand, the TrBh comments on āśrayaparāvṛtti as follows: 10)
Regarding transmutation (parāvṛtti) of [the basis, ālayavijñāna], it carries out parāvṛtti as adaptability (karmanyatā), dharmakāya, and two kinds of knowledge (dvayajñānabhāva), when it carries out nivṛtti as the impregnations of debilitating tendencies (dausṭhulya), fruition (vipāka), and two kinds of vāsanā.

We find that in the TrBh, the removal of negative elements is represented as nivṛtti, on the other hand, the obtaining of positive elements is represented as parāvṛtti. Therefore, it is assumed that tasya vyāvṛttih (k. 5a) which is the transmutation meaning “removal” is distinguished from āśrayaparāvṛtti (k. 29) which is the transmutation meaning “obtaining.” This is different from the MSA’s interpretation which I mentioned above. Then, in the PPU, both terms vyāvṛtti and parāvṛtti are also interpreted as removal, mostly due to the MSA’s interpretation. However, there is a specific background to this approach, explained as follows.

3. The Background Thought of Ālayavijñāna in the PPU

In the PPU, the ālayavijñāna is interpreted as one that holds the negative elements, because the term ālaya is defined as “holding the vāsanā of all the defiled factors (dharma)” (in synopsis 3.4.2). It can be stated that the transmutation of the ālayavijñāna is the removal of negative elements of the ālayavijñāna.

We are able to find one of the reasons why the transmutation of the basis is interpreted as “removable” transmutation in disputes between Ratnākaraśānti and some Mādhyamika thinkers. In the latter parts of the PPU, Ratnākaraśānti criticizes some Mādhyamika thinkers. In their disputes, one of the issues is how to attain ultimate wisdom (paramārthasambodha). Some Mādhyamika thinkers insist that there are citta (mind) and caitasika (mental factors) at the convention (samvṛtī) level and, that the destruction of these citta and caitasika means attaining paramārthasambodha. Ratnākaraśānti refutes these arguments. One of Ratnākaraśānti’s refutations of this position is as follows: 13)

The basis that is marked by citta and caitasika is not destroyed. It (the basis) is called ālaya, as long as the seeds of the contaminated dharmas are not destroyed, and when it (the seed of the contaminated dharma) is destroyed, [it is] called the anāsravadhātu, vimuktikāya, and dharmakāya. Additionally, due to this [reason], the destruction of citta and caitasika is not reasonable.
Though we cannot find the direct mention, it is certain that the *PPU* associates this context with *tasya vyāvṛttiḥ* and *āśrayaparāvṛtti*. The basis that is marked by the continuum of *citta* and *caitasika* is called the *ālayavijñāna* as long as its seeds (*bijā*) exist. Likewise, it will be called the *anāsravadhātu*, *vimuktikāya*, or *dharmakāya*, when these seeds are destroyed. This is the same interpretation that *ālayavijñāna* which is defined that is holding the *vāsanā* of all the defiled factors (dharma) and the basis which is called the *anāsravadhātu*, *vimuktikāya*, and *dharmakāya* through *tasya vyāvṛttiḥ* and *āśrayaparāvṛtti*. In short, the *PPU* refers to *tasya vyāvṛttiḥ* and *āśrayaparāvṛtti* as the destruction of the seeds of all the defiled factors (dharma) in the *ālayavijñāna* in this context.

Concerning the issue of attaining *paramārthasambodha*, in opposition to some Mādhyamika thinkers who insist that *paramārthasambodha* is attained through destroying *citta* and *caitasika*, Ratnākaraśānti explains that *paramārthasambodha* is attained through destroying all of the habit energies (*vāsanās*) and seeds (*bijā*) that are held in the *ālayavijñāna*.

4. Conclusion

The previous studies have pointed out that the *ālayavijñāna* has hardly been mentioned after Dharmakīrti. However, at the time of Ratnākaraśānti, it seemed necessary to discuss it. As mentioned above, in one of his refutations of Mādhyamika thinkers, Ratnākaraśānti in his *PPU* refers to the *ālayavijñāna* as the basis for progressing toward enlightenment. In other words, we are able to attain *paramārthasambodha* by destroying every *vāsanā* and seed which is held in the *ālayavijñāna*. This interpretation is related to the theory of *vyāvṛtti*, transmutation in the meaning of “removal” in this text.

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**Notes**

1) Muroji 1987, pp. (119)–(123), Franco 1997, pp. 77–81, Funayama 2000, pp. 325–329, etc.

2) *TrBh*, Lévi ed., p. 22, Buescher ed., p. 60.

3) *TrBh*, Lévi ed., p. 22, Buescher ed., p. 60.

*tasya vyāvṛttir arhattve / k. 5a . . . ālayavijñānāśrita-dausthulyaniravasaprahānād ālayavijñānaṃ vyāvṛttam bhavatī /

*TrBh*, Lévi ed., pp. 43–44, Buescher ed., pp. 138, 140.

*aśrayasya parāvṛttir dvidhādausthulyahānītaḥ /k. 29cd// . . . aśrayasya parāvṛtti bhavatī*
(210) Ālayavijñāna in the Prajñāpāramitopadeśa (HAYASHIMA)

jitapārāṛtham āha / āśrayasya parāvr̥ttir iti / āśrayo 'tra sarvabijakam ālayavijñānam /

4) TrBh, Lévi ed., p. 22, Buescher ed., p. 60.
ālayavijñānāśrita-dausthulyaniravāsaṣaprāhānād ālayavijñānam vyāvr̥ttam bhavati / BBh, p. 405.
dausthulyasya niravāsaprāhānād asyāśrayah parivr̥tto bhavati /

5) See note 7.

6) PPU, Katsu's synopsis 3.4.4: byang chub sams dang ni sa bcu rnam la ji ltar rigs par nyon mongs pa'i bag la nyal spangs pa dang shes bya'i sgrib pa'i bag chags gang gi tshe yang dag par bcom par byas pa de'i tshe de bzhin gshegs pa dgra bcom pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas su 'gyur te / dgra bcom pa 'di gsum la kun gzhi rnam par shes pa ldog par 'gyur ro //

7) PPU, Katsu's synopsis 3.4.5: log pa ji lta bu žig chen ne / gnas gyur pa ste sams kyi rayun gyi mtshan nyid kun nas nyon mongs pa'i gnas su gyur pa'i cha log nas rnam par byang ba'i cha nam mkha'jirid pa'i bar du 'jug pa ste / kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos thams cad kyi sa bon du gyur pa'i bag chags yang dag par bcdad pas / kun gzhi rnam par shes pa de'i dngos po de'i gnas su gyur pa spangs pa ni sa bon zad pas kun nas nyon mongs pa'i chos thams cad skye bar mi 'gyur te / de'i tshe rten de ni nam mkha'ltar ro gcig pa nyid kyis zag pa med pa'i dbyings zhes brjod la / sa bon zad pas las dang gnas dang longs spyod du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa skye bar mi 'gyur te / rnam par grol ba'i sdu skes bya bar yang brjod do //

8) MSA, p. 42.
pañcendriya-parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / IX k. 41ab
manaso 'pi parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 42ab
sārthodgraḥa-parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 43ab
vikalpaṣya parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 44ab
pratisthāyōḥ parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 45ab
maithunasya parāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 46ab
ākāṣasānya-vyāvr̥ttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate param / k. 47ab

9) See Sakuma 1996, pp. 382–384.

10) TrBh, Lévi ed., p. 43, Buescher ed., p. 140.

tasya parāvr̥ttir yā dausthulyavipākavāsaprāhānābhāvena nivr̥ttau satyāṃ karmanyatādharmakāyāvajñānabhāvena parāvr̥ttīḥ /

11) PPU, Katsu's synopsis 4.5.2: sams dang sams las byung ba'yi rayun gyi // mtshan nyid zag pa med pa de nyid ni gnas zhes bya la / zag pa dang bcas pa'i chos thams cad kyi sa bon ma zad pas de srid du ni kun gzhi zhes brjod do // zad nas ni zag pa med pa'i dbyings dang / rnam par grol ba'i sdu dang / chos kyi skes bya kyang brjod do / de'i phyir yang sams dang sams las byung ba zad par mi rigs so //

Abbreviations

BBh A Statement of Whole Course of the Bodhisattva Bodhisattvabhūmi. Ed. Unrai Wogihara. Tokyo: Seigo Kenkyukai, 1936. Reprint, Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1971.

MSA Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṃkāra: Exposé de la Doctrine du Grand Véhicule. Tome I, Texte. Ed. Sylvain Lévi.
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Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1907. Reprint, Kyoto: Rinsen Book, 1983.

PPU Prajñāpāramitopadeśa. D no. 4079, P no. 5579.
TrK Trīṃśikā-kārikā. See TrBh.
TrBh Trīṃśikā-bhāṣya.

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