

A Study on the Human Embryology as Depicted in the Yogācāra School

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Literally, the science of the embryo is called ‘Embryology’. On the other hand, it is a branch of science concerned with the study of embryos and the structure and development of the embryo of a particular organism. However, it is dealt with commencing with the union of male and female gametes, development of an organism, covering of an egg or within the body of the mother, metamorphosis, hatching or birth etc (Patten, 1953 : 01). Though, the Buddhism is based on the final emancipation of human beings, we can find some embryological teachings also in the teachings of the Buddha (Majjhima-nikāya, 2006 : 622 & Wickremagama, 2006 : 152). There are well known four philosophical schools in Buddhism as follow; *Sarvāstivāda or Vaibhāṣika*, *Sautrāntika*, *Mādhyamaka* and *Yogācāra* or *Vijñānavāda* (*Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*, 1999 : Introduction). *Yogācāryabhūmiśāstra* or *Yogacaryābhūmiśāstra* is the masterpiece of the Yogācāra tradition. It is attributed to the venerable Asaṅga who was a renowned teacher and the pioneer of that tradition. However, many embryological teachings can be seen especially in the second chapter as named *Manobhūmi* of *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*, under the topics of *Antarābhavaḥ*, *Garbhāvakraṅtiḥ* (*Bīja doṣa* and *Karma doṣa*), *Pritisandhiḥ* and *Garbhāvasthā*. (Bhattacharya, 1957 : 11-72) Not only in the Yogācāra tradition of *Mahāyāna* (Literally, the great vehicle) but also in the *Theravāda* (Literally, the doctrine of Theras) or *Hīnayāna* (Literally, the inferior vehicle) tradition is seen some teachings under the topic mentioned above (Vidusaraṇī, 2010 : 31-44). Though, my ambition on this research paper is to discuss, find some special features, comparing with other traditions etc, regarding to the human embryology with special reference to the Yogācāra School.

Keywords: Embryology, *Yogācāra* School, *Vijñānavāda*, *Yogācārabhūmiśāstra*, *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna*

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