On the Two Truths Theory of Klong-rdol Bla-ma

Kōichi Furusaka

The *Theg-chen-gyi mngon-pa'i sde-snod las byung-ba'i dBu-ma'i skor-gyi ming-gi rnam-grangs* (TH. No. 6540: Explanation of the canons and treatises of the Mādhyamika school, dealing with technical terms found in them) is a kind of the summary of philosophical systems which was written by Klong-rdol bla-ma Ngag-dbang blo-bzang (born 1719).

Its text has 21 folios, but the latter half of it (12a3-21a4) is the summary of Tibetan Buddhism entitled "*Bod gaṅgs-can-gyi lta-ba'i grub-mtha' rags-rim ngo-sprod*" (the sketchy introduction of Tibetan philosophical systems).

In the first half, the two truths theories of Indian Buddhism are summarized. The schools treated are Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Vijñānavāda, Mādhyamika-Svātantrika and Mādhyamika-Prāsaṅgika.

(I) Firstly Klong-rdol bla-ma interprets the two truths theory of Vaibhāṣikas.

"Definiens (*lakṣaṇa* : *mtshan-nyid*) of ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*) is that though someone destroys or mentally denies the other thing, the idea which it takes is not lost, and cognized as dharma."¹⁾

"Definienda (*lakṣya* : *mtshan-gzhi*) are the atoms which are partless in directions, indivisible momentary noetic events, cessation through wisdom (*pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha*) and cessation in a natural way (*aprasaṃkhyānirodha*).

Also (another) definiens of the ultimate truth is that it is to be grasped as the reality through knowledge of designation without passion. Definienda are as same as before.

"Definiens of conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*) is that when someone destroys or mentally denies the other thing, the idea which it takes is lost, and cognized as dharma.

Definienda are such as a bottle or water in a bottle.

Also, another definiens of conventional truth it is to be grasped as the reality through knowledge of designation with passion. Definieda are as same as before."

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(II) Next, Klong-rdol bla-ma interprets the two truths theory of Sautrāntikas.

“Definiens of ultimate truth is that the idea is attained as the appearance on an ultimate perception. Definiens of conventional truth is that the idea is attained as the appearance on everyday understanding. Also, they can be summarized as the attained to perceptual appearance and the attained to appearance on understanding.”

(III) Next, the two truths theory according to the view of Vijñānavādins is interpreted. Then firstly conventional truths are explained.

“Definiens of a conventional truth is the cognition of dharma from which passions may be born. Definienda are all things which have own-characteristic of the unfulfilled (nature) and all understandings of common characteristics.

Definiens of ultimate truth is the *dharma* of which cognition arrives at the extreme limit (*paryanta-gata*) by means of path of purification (*viśuddhi-mārga*). The ultimate truth and the fulfilled (*pariniṣpanna*) (nature) have equal meaning.

Here, some one says that (there are two kinds of the fulfilled); i. e. the fulfilled concerning selflessness of person and the fulfilled concerning selflessness of *dharma*. The first is similar to the fine selflessness of person (*gang-zag-gi bdag-med phra-mo*), and the second the fine selflessness of *dharma* (*chos-kyi bdag-med phra-mo lta-bu'o*).

But some one says that if (something) is the fulfilled, then it must be the fulfilled concerning the selflessness of *dharma*. He keeps in mind that definienda of the ultimate truth are the *śūnyatā* (in the sense) that the marks of matter and apprehender of the matter are empty because of (depending to each) other things; the *śūnyatā* (in the sense) that matter dependent on external object is empty; that (anything) is not to be established and does not exist really on its own character as the basis of affection discriminating matter and apprehender of the matter; that (anything) is not to be established and does not exist really on its own character as the basis into which the word “matter, matter” enters; that the constructed is not to be established and does not exist really on its own character; that the constructed on the own-being of dharmas is not to be established and does not exist really on its own character; that the constructed of the constructed on the distinction of dharmas is not to be established and does not exist really on its own character.

It is the synonym of the names of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), suchness (*tathatā*),

the reality-limit (*bhūtakoti*), the realm of the signless (*animitta*), the realm of all *dharma*s (*dharma-dhātu*), reality (*tattva*), the fine selflessness of *dharma* (*dharma-nairātmya*), the events of the ultimate truth of which cognition arrives at the extreme limit (*pariyanta-gata*) by means of path of purification (*viśuddhi-mārga*).

(IV) Next, the two truths according to the view of Mādhyamika-Svātantrikas are interpreted.

"Definiens of ultimate truth is that it is to be understood by the exalted knowledge of all aspects which understands the modes as they are in themselves in the manner that dualistic appearances disappear, but it is not to be understood after the manner of that which has dualistic appearance by that knowledge (*ji lta-ba rtogs-pa'i rnam-mkhyen gyis gnyis-snang dang bcas-pa'i tshul-gyi rtogs-par bya-ba ma yin-par/ des gnyis snang nub-pa'i tshul gyis rtogs-par bya-ba*).

Also, another definiens of ultimate truth is that it is to be understood in the manner that dualistic appearances disappear by perception as a means of cognition which actually understands the nature of thing, and it is understood in the manner that any thing is established.

Its definiendum is similar to the sixteen or eighteen *śūnyatā*.

Definiens of conventional truth is that it exists in the category of the understood after the manner of that which has dualistic appearance by means of the exalted knowledge of all aspects which understands the varieties of phenomenal aspect as they are in totality (*ji snyed-pa rtogs-pa'i rnam-mkhyen gyis gnyis-snang dang bcas-pa'i tshul gyis rtogs-par bya-ba'i rigs su gnas-pa*).

Also, another definiens of conventional truth is that it exists in the category of the understood after the manner of that which has dualistic appearance by perception as a means of cognition which actually understands the nature of thing. This and the existence of un-ultimate truth (*don-dam-pa bden-pa ma yin-pa'i yod-pa*) are synonymous.

"And also, according to the view of the Svātantrikas, there are two kinds (of the conventional truth); i.e. the unreal conventional truth (*mithya-saṃvṛtisatya : log-pa'i kun-rdzob*) and the real conventional truth (*tathya-saṃvṛtisatya : yang-dag kun-rdzob*).

Definiens of the unreal conventional truth is that it can be understood by rough worldly beings, although it is not established as appearance in the understanding

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which makes his own perception the object. Its definiendum is such as the image of shape in a mirror.

Definiens of the real conventional truth is that it can not be understood by rough worldly beings, moreover it is not (?) established as appearance in the understanding which makes his own perception the object (*rang snang yul du byed-pa'i blo la snang-ba ltar ma grub-pa* [sic] '*jig-rten rang 'ga'-bas rtogs mi nus-pa yang-dag kun-rdzob kyis mtshan-nyid*). Its definienda are such as bottle or pillar."

Here Klong-rdol bla-ma quotes Jñānagarbha's *Satyadvayavibhaṅga-kārikā* (TH. 3881: SVK) 12.

"Just it is said in the Two truths of Mādhyamika as follows:

Since they are able and unable

To perform functions as they appear,

The division of real and unreal

Conventionality is made."²⁾ (Dg. ed. fol. 2a4)

(V) Lastly the two truths according to the view of Prāsaṅgikas are interpreted.

"Definiens of ultimate truth is that when the means of right knowledge itself to examine the extreme limit becomes to the right knowledge in you, and it has been obtained as the purpose. Its definienda are the fine selflessness of person, the fine selflessness of *dharma* and the eighteen *śūnyatās*.

Definiens of conventional truth is that whatever purpose itself which is obtained by a means of knowledge to examine convention (*vyavahāra*) becomes the means of conventional knowledge in you. Its definienda are all judgements and things which are not the ultimate truth."

And here Klong-rdol bla-ma quotes the similar definiens of the two truths shewn by lCang-skyā rol-pa'i rdo-rje (1717-86). So it seems that Klong-rdol bla-ma followed lCang-skyā's theory as his junior in the same dGe-lugs-pa school.

Now I wish to inquire into the above-mentioned two truths theory of the Mādhyamika Svātantrika.

In the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (BBh) in *Yogācārabhūmi*, the two truths are suggested with the expression "*yāvad bhāvikatā*" and "*yathāvad bhāvikatā*". These words are found in the above-mentioned context of Svātant-

rika's theory. BBh. chap. 4 says,

"What is knowledge of reality? Concisely, there are two sorts: (1) that sort which consists of [knowing] the noumenal aspect of *dharma*s, or the true state of *dharma*s as they are in they are in themselves; and (2) that sort which consists of [knowing] the phenomenal aspect of *dharma*s, as they are in totality. In short, knowledge of reality should be understood as [knowledge of] "*dharma*s as they are, and as they are in totality."³⁾

The *Yu k'ie louen ki* (*Yugaronki*: Taisho. No. 1828), which is the only commentary upon the whole of the *Yogācārabhūmi* composed by a Korean monk Tonrin who flourished in T'ang dynasty, explicates that the essence of (1) the *yathāvad-bhāvikatā* is the *paramārtha-satya*, the *pariṇiṣpanna-svabhāva*, on the contrary the essence of (2) the *yāvad-bhāvikatā* is the *lokasaṃvṛti-satya*, the *paratantra-svabhāva*.

Similarly the *Yogācārabhūmau Bodhisattvabhūmi-vyākḥā* written by Sāgaramegha relates the *yāvad-bhāvikatā* and the *yathāvadbhāvikatā* respectively to the conventional knowledge (*saṃvṛti-jñāna*) and the ultimate knowledge (*paramārtha-jñāna*) or the *paramārtha-satya*. (Dg. ed., fol. 55a3)

On the other side, Bhāvaviveka who founded the Mādhyamika-Svātantrika school analysed the *paramārth-satya* into two levels. The first is the *paramātha* itself and the second is named "the conventional (*sāṃketika*)" *paramārtha* by Avalokitavrata in the *Prajñāpradīpāṭikā* (TH. No. 3859).

But Bhāvaviveka did not divide the *saṃvṛti-satya* into any levels. Notwithstanding he used the term "*tathya-saṃvṛti*" in *Madhyamakahrdayakarikā* (MHK) and *Tarkajvālā* (TJ), there he did not specify the counterpart concept to it. But in the *Madhyamārtḥasaṃgraha* (TH. No. 3857: MAS) which is assigned to Bhāvaviveka or Bhavya (Legs-ldan byed), the author divides the *saṃvṛti* into the *mithyā-saṃvṛti* and the *bhūta-* (or *tathya-*) *saṃvṛti*. This difference seems to support the hypothesis that Bhāvaviveka who composed *Prajñāpradīpa*, MHK and TJ and "Bhāvaviveka" or "Bhavya" who composed MAS are not the same one.⁴⁾

In MAS not only the two *saṃvṛtis* are shown as the unreal *saṃvṛti* (*mithyā-saṃvṛti*) and the real *saṃvṛti* (*tathya-saṃvṛti*), but also the ultimate

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is divided into two sorts; *pariyāya-paramārtha* (the synonymous ultimate) and *apariyāya-p.* (the un-synonymous u.). The former has also two sorts; one is the logic and the other is the negative in regard of origination. But later on, this point of the ultimate became not to be emphasized in Svātantrikas. Jñānagarbha divided also the *saṃvṛti satya* (conventional truth) into two sorts as aforementioned.

Thus Klong-rdol bla-ma states the two sorts of *saṃvṛti* as the characteristics of Svātantrika view. But he does not also mention the two levels of the ultimate. Moreover it is noteworthy that he applies the two realities of the Yogācāra, i.e. *yathāvad-bhāvikatā* and *yāvad-bhāvikatā* respectively to *paramārtha* and *saṃvṛti*. So it seems that in later times the Svātantrika view about the two-truths came in effect to be represented as more nearer to the views of Jñānagarbha and Yogācāra rather than to the view of Bhāvaviveka.

- 1) *Abhidharmakośa* (VI 4); H.V. Guenther: *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, 1972), p. 54-5. Cf. A. Klein: *Knowledge and Liberation* (Ithaca, 1986) p. 34.
- 2) D.S. Lopez; *A Study of Svātantrika* (Ithaca, 1987), p. 207.
- 3) *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Ed. by N. Dutt (Patna, 1966), p. 25; J.D. Willis, *On Knowing Reality* (New York, 1979) p. 69.
- 4) Cf. Yasunori Ejima: *Chugan Shiso No Tenkai—Bhāvaviveka Kenkyū* (Shunjusha, Tokyo, 1980) p. 18f.

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