A Sketch of Candragomin's Buddhakāya Theory

Hidenori S. SAKUMA

1. Candragomin is generally known as a grammarian or philosopher-poet and dramatist. But since we find a great number of works ascribed to him in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka and some of his passages quoted by later scholars, he must have been an eminent person in the history of Buddhist thought too. Nevertheless his dates have not yet been determined and, broadly speaking, there are three theories in regard to his dates; namely, he is said to have flourished in the latter half of the fifth century, in the latter half of the seventh century, or at the beginning of the ninth century.

1.1 The first hypothesis concerns Candragomin as the grammarian who wrote the *Candravyākaraṇa* and other works and is based on a comparison of their content with such works as the *Vākyapadīya* by Bhartṛhari; this hypothesis was first put forward by Liebich (1899). The second hypothesis concerns Candragomin as the poet and dramatist and is partly based on I-ching's report that Candragomin was alive while I-ching was in India. In addition, Bu-ston's and Tāranātha's histories of Buddhism state that Candragomin was a contemporary of Candrakīrti and that a debate took place between them. Frauwallner has warned, however, that one should be careful in using such information.

These two hypotheses have been discussed in detail by Hahn (1974 pp. 1-9) and I have simply followed him here.

1.2 The third hypothesis concerns Candragomin as the logician who wrote the *Nyāyasiddhyāloka*. Steinkellner (1984) compared it with works by Dharmakīrti as regards their content and, taking the dates of its translators into consideration, he then concluded that Candragomin would have flourished at the beginning of the ninth century.

1.3 Recently Mark Tatz has dealt with Candragomin mainly as a Mahā-

yānist or Yogācārin and has placed him in the latter half of the seventh century. Tatz (1982, pp. 4-7) has classified the works of Candragomin from the viewpoint of their subject matter, listing them under the following headings: *Didactic, Commentary, Grammar, Drama (Kāvya), Praise (Kāvya), Tantric practice and References to Lost Works*. I do not have any intention of dealing here with the question of whether or not all these works should be ascribed to the same author.

2 Under the heading "References to Lost Works" Tatz gives three lost works by Candragomin, one of them entitled the **Trikāyāvatāra* according to Bu-ston's and Tāranātha's histories of Buddhism¹⁾. This work is neither included in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka nor can it be identified with the text of the same title (P. ed. No. 5290; D. ed. No. 3890). On the other hand we find passages ascribed to Candragomin which are quoted in dealing some later texts, mainly in commentaries of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* and dealing with the Buddhakāya theory in the Yogācāra system. This paper attempts to analyze these passages and probes the possibility of identifying the **Trikāyāvatāra* with these passages.

3 The quoted passages may be divided into two types in accordance with their content: the one is from the *Munimatālaṃkāra* by Abhayākara-gupta and the *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya* by Daśabalaśrimitra (Skilling 1990) and the other from Tson-kha-pa's and ḥJam-dbyaṅs-bshad-pa's commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.

3.1.1 The first type of the quoted passages appears as follows:

Abhayākara-gupta, *Munimatālaṃkāra* P. No. 5299 Ha 287b8ff.; D. No. 3903 A 219b1ff.

slob dpon tsandra go mis kyaṅ gsuṅs pa/

- 1 de bshin ṅid ni chos skuḥo ḥdi//rnam rtog rnams kyi spyod yul min//
sems can daṅ don kun gyi//raṅ bshin de ni gñis med paḥo//
- 2 sna tshogs gzugs can sku rnams daṅ// ḥgro rnams de bshin ṅid ṅo bor//
gaṅ du ro gcig gyur pa na// rgyam tsho ru ni chu bo bshin//
- 3 ḥdi ste rnam pa ḥdi ltaḥi sku// skyob pa ḥdi yi chos skuḥo//
rnam pa thams cad rnam dag phyir// rdzogs paḥi byaṅ chub kho naḥi yul//

- 4 h̄jig rten rnams su lhun grub par// rtag tu de yi nus pa rnams//
ñi maḥi ḥoñ zer rnams bshin du// mthaḥ yas pa yi don rnams mdzad//
- 5 dmus loñ lta bu bdag gshag pa// rañ gi bsod nams kyi bskyed paḥi//
mig cag kun gyi gcig pu ste// cig car ñi ma bshin du mthoñ//
- 6 deḥi chos bdud rtsiḥi bcud kyis len// ḥon pa lta bu bdag bshag paḥi//
skal ba ldan rnams bsod nams kyis// bskyed paḥi rnabs da ltaḥaṇ ñan//
- 7 skad cig skad cig theg gsum gyis//sa bon ji ltar bsam ji ltar//
mthaḥ med phyogs su mthaḥ yas paḥi// sems can ḥdi yis sbyoñ bar mdzad//
ces so//

Dasabalasrlmitra, *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya*, P. No. 5865 Ño 237a3ff.;

D.No. 3897.

- dge bsñen chen po zla baḥi shal nas/ chos kyi skuḥi dbaṇ du byas na gsuñs pa/
- 1 ḥdi yi chos sku de bshin ñid// rnam rtog rnams kyi spyod yul min//
sems can rnams dañ don rnams kyi// rañ bshin de dag gñis su med//
 - 2 sna tshogs ño boḥi sku rnams dañ// ḥgro rnams de ñid ño bo rnams//
gañ du ro gcig ḥgro ḥgyur ba// rgya mtshor ḥbab paḥi chu bo bshin//
 - 3 rnam pa ḥdi ḥdraḥi sku de ni// skyob pa rnams kyi chos sku ste//
rnam pa thams cad rnam dag pa// rdzogs byañ chub kyi spyod yul ñid//
 - 4 de yi nus pa rañ ṇaṇ gis// dus rnams kun tu h̄jig rten du//
mthaḥ yas don rnams byed pa ni// ñi maḥi ḥod zer lta buḥo//
loñs spyod rdzogs paḥi dbaṇ du byas pa ni//
 - 5 dmus loñ lta bus bdag spañs nas// rañ ñid bsod nams bsags can gyis//
de ni gcig pu gcig car du// ñi ma lta bur kun gyis mthoñ//
 - 6 ḥon pa lta bu bdag spañs nas// bsod nams nor bsags sñan rnams kyis//
dam chos bdud rtsiḥi bcud len ni// de la de riñ yañ ldan pa ñid//
ces so// sprul paḥi skuḥi du byas pa ni/
 - 7 mthaḥ yas phyogs su mthaḥ med paḥi// sems can theg pa gsum gyis ḥdir//
yañ dag yañ du rnam dag byed//sa bon ci bshin bsam ji bshin//
shes so//

If one disregards differences in terminology, it should be evident that these two quoted passages, namely from Nos. 1 to 7, are identical. As regards their content, they present a threefold *buddhakāya* system that clearly belongs to the traditions of the Yogācāra school. It is worth noting that this passage was known not only in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* tradition

but also in other traditions.

- 1 His *dharmakāya* is the ultimate reality (*tathatā*), which is beyond the sphere of discrimination (*avikalpagocara*), and is not separate (*advaya*) from the true nature of sentient beings (*sattva*) and phenomenal things.
- 2 The various forms of bodies (*viśvarūpa*) and the [sentient and non-sentient] existents are characterized by the ultimate reality, which is everywhere in complete harmony (*ekarasa*) just like water merging into the ocean.
- 3 This form of body is the *dharmakāya* of the Protectors, which is the sphere of only perfect enlightenment (*sambodhi*) because it is perfectly pure in every aspect.

Because of lack of space I shall refrain from translating the remaining verses.

3.1.2 The Buddhakāya system of this passage is, roughly speaking, such that the *dharmakāya* characterized by both *tathatā* and *jñāna* is a generic term and transforms into either the *sāmbhogikakāya* or *nairmāṇikakāya* for the sake of benefitting of the sentient beings. This system is in clear agreement with the thought of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra-kārikā* IX-60ff. and should be located in Yogācāra *buddhakāya* tradition (Sakuma 1987, 1989).

3.2.1 The second type quotation is that quoted by Tson-kha-pa and ḥJam-dbyaṅs bshad-pa.

Tson-kha-pa, *gSer phren*, Tsha 247a6ff.

tsa ndra gau mis/

8 gañ yañ kun gshi rnam par śes// me loñ ye śes ñid gyur pa//
de yañ chos kyi dbyiṅs kyi ni// ño bo ñid du ḥgaḥ shig hdod//

9 ñon moṅs can yid gnas gyur pa// mñam ñid ye śes brjod par bya//
so sor rtog paḥi ye śes ni// yid kyi rnam śes ñid deḥo//

de dag loṅs spyod rdzogs sku ñid//

ces dañ/

10 kha cig me loñ ye śes kyañ// loṅs spyod rdzogs paḥi sku ru rtogs//
de yañ de la rgyu ñid phyir// ñe bar btags pas de bshin gshan//

- 11 dbaṅ po lña yi rnam śes gaṅ// de ni don kun yoṅs ḥdzin phyir//
 sems can kun gyi don du ni// bya ba sgrub pa tsam ṅid thob//
 12 de yaṅ rtag par thams cad du// dus ji bshin daṅ bsam ji bshin//
 saṅs rgyas rnam kyī sprul sku ste// sprul ba kun gyi rgyu yin phyir//
 13 kha cig yid kyī kho na la// sprul paḥi sku ṅid du ni rtag//
 dbaṅ po lña yi rnam śes gaṅ// de yi loṅs spyod rdzogs skur ro//
 shes dgoṅs rgyan du draṅs so//

ḥJam-dbyans-bshad-pa. *sKabs brgyad paḥi mthaḥ dpyod ḥdhrul sel Ganggāḥi chu rgyun ma pham shal luṅ: Chos sku, ṅa, chos sku, 76ff. (348)*

- tsa nda go mis kyaṅ/
 8 gaṅ yaṅ kun gshi rnam par śes//me loṅ ye śes ṅid gyur pa//
 de gaṅ chos kyī dbyiṅs kyī ni// ṅo bo ṅid du ḥgaḥ shig ḥdod//
 9 ṅion moṅs can yid gnas gyur pa// mñam ṅid ye śes brjod par bya//
 so sor rtogs paḥi ye śes ni// yid kyī rnam śes ṅid deḥo//
de dag loṅs spyod rdzogs sku ṅid//

ces gsuṅs paḥi phyir...

tsa ndra go mis/

12d deḥi rjes de ma thag pa/ sprul ba kun gyi rgyu yin phyir//
 shes gsuṅs paḥi phyir/

tsa ndra go mis/

13cd dbaṅ po lña yi rnam śes gaṅ//de ni loṅs spyod rdzogs skur ro//
 shes gsuṅs paḥi phyir/...

tsa ndra go mis/

14 chos la rdzogs loṅs spyod sñon ni//byaṅ chub sems dpaḥ chen po rnam//
chos la rdzogs loṅs spyod phyir yaṅ//

shes gsuṅs paḥi phyir...

3.2.2 When comparing these two quoted passages, it is found that Nos.8, 9, 12d and 13cd are identical, It is possible that ḥJam-dbyaṅs-bshad-pa quoted them simply from the *gSer phreṅ*, but to the best of my knowledge No. 14 does not appear in the *gSer phreṅ*. This means that the original text of this quotation have existed and that No.14 derived from this text.

I shall select and translate only the important verses in order to examine the *buddhakāya* system to which they give expression.

8 It is said that the *ālayavijñāna* is transformed into the *ādarsajñāna*

whose original nature is the *dharmadhātu*.

- 9 It is said that the *kliṣṭamanas* is transformed into the *saṃatājñāna* [and that] the *manovijñāna* [is transformed into] the *pratyavekṣā-jñāna*.
- 10abc Some understand that the *ādarśajñāna* also appertains to the *sāṃbhogikakāya*, because it is its origin. (MSAbh: the *sāṃbhogikakāya* is the origin of the *sāṃbhogabuddha*. Sakuma 1987)
- 11 In order to benefit all sentient being, only the *vijñāna* of the five organs obtains the *kṛtyānuṣṭhāna*[-*jñāna*], because it grasps all objects well.
- 12 As it appears of any time, anywhere, as the occasion demands and at will, it is at the same time (yañ) the *nairmāṇikakāya* of the Buddhas, because it is the origin of all manifestations.
- 13 Some understand that only the *mano* [-*vijñāna*] appertains to the *nairmāṇikakāya*. The *vijñāna* of the five organs appertains to the *sāṃbhogikakāya*.

Tsoñ-kha-pa then adds “In this way [the passage] is quoted in the *Munimatālaṃkāra*”

3.2.3 Here we find three different theories on the *buddhakāya* system, and it is to be assumed that Candragomin wrote this passage after these theories had been already established after much discussion about them. In fact Nos. 9 and 11, in which the combinations “*manovijñāna: pratyavekṣājñāna*” and “*pañcendriyavijñāna: kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*” have already been fixed, would have been written at the time of or after, for example, Sthiramati (Sakuma 1987, 1984). No.10 seems to suggest the theory of, for example, Hsüan-tsang in the *Fo-ti-ching-lun* 仏地經論 and the *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* 成唯識論 (Sakuma 1987, 1989). In this case Candragomin would have been active in the latter half of the seventh century.

4 As mentioned above, according to Tsoñ-kha-pa this passage by Candragomin was quoted from the *Munimatālaṃkāra*. I have not, however, been able to find any identical passage in the *Munimatālaṃkāra* but only a passage corresponding to Nos.1 to 7. This is somewhat strange, but as

regards content we may interpret this fact as follows: Nos. 1 to 7 correspond to the presentation of this system (=MSA-k, MSAbh, etc.) while Nos. 8 to 14 indicate more developed theories such as those of SAVbh by Sthiramati or the *Ch'eng-wei-shih-lun* 成唯識論 translated and compiled by Hsüan-tsang. There are no contradictions between the first and second type of quotation, and so it may be assumed that both derive from the same work by Candragomin and that this work was the lost **Trikāyāvātāra* by Candragomin.

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1) Bu-ston: (Tib. Text ed. L. Chandra, p. 836, 1.; English Tr. by Obermiller, Part II, p. 133.) Tāranātha: (Tib. Text ed. A. Schiefner, p. 120, 17; Japanese Tr. by Teramoto, p. 226)

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(Associate Professor, Shitennōji International Buddhist University, Ph.D.)