

Special Feature

# Wonhyo's View of Human Beings and his Redemption of Mankind

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## Posing the Questions

Wonhyo 元曉 (617-686) was the most remarkable thinker and the most popular propagator in the history of Korean Buddhism. The 7th century was an extremely dynamic period, during which Silla fought fierce battles with Goguryeo and Baekje and finally unified the Three Kingdoms. Peace was found after a long period of war, and Buddhism spread to all areas and classes of the society during the early period of Unified Silla, or mid-Silla, resulting in the formation of a Buddhist society. Meanwhile, as the East Asian international order was formed around Tang, which had reunified the Chinese continent, Buddhism prospered as the universal and dominant culture of East Asia. Against this background, Wonhyo widely read a vast amount of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures and wrote a total of more than 70 copies 部 and over 150 volumes 卷. In his writings, he not only systemized doctrinal study from the perspective of Hwajaeng 和諍 but also devoted himself to the ideal of Mahāyāna Buddhism, i.e., to practice Bodhisattva's edification of all living beings. In short, Wonhyo, by his doctrinal study and commitment to edifying all living beings, was the pioneer of Buddhism of mid-Silla and even East Asian Buddhism, which richly bloomed in the 8th century, and in that sense, was a leading Buddhist thinker of doctrinal Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

The present article aims to focus on Wonhyo's view of humans. To be more specific, the article attempts to clarify what Wonhyo thought in response to the fundamental question of "what are humans?" and how he put his thoughts into practice.

Unfortunately, only 10 % of Wonhyo's vast writings remain today. Furthermore, judging from his remaining writings as well as the texts quoted by other Buddhist scholars, there does not seem to be any writings that solely dealt with the theme of human beings. Given this limitation in research material, previous studies tended to focus on certain thoughts or certain scriptures and explore them philosophically (Yi 1967; Go 1975; Kim 1976; Eun 1982; Kim 1992, 1994; Yi 1996; Nam 2004).

This article will both be based on previous research accomplishments and move beyond them to attempt a new methodology and perspective

to further advance the existing understanding of the way Wonhyo viewed humans. In terms of methodology, given the lack of remaining material, I will first systematize the Buddhist terms related to human beings, which will serve as the basis in my analyses of relevant material in Wonhyo's writings. This methodology will help understand where the view of humans of Wonhyo, as a doctrinal-study Buddhist monk, stands in the history of Buddhist thought. In terms of perspective, considering that he conducted theoretical investigation and practice together, I will relate his view of humans seen in his writings with his practice of edifying all living beings, which is the aspect biographical material on him emphasize. This perspective will give us insight into the historical significance of the thought of Wonhyo as the zeitgeist of his times.

## Buddhism as Humanism

It is said that Gautama Siddhartha, or Shakyamuni, who was born in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC as a prince of the small kingdom of Kapilavastu, which was located along the south of the Himalayas where present-day Nepal and India meet, said as soon as he was born, "I alone am honored above and below the heaven!" 天上天下 唯我獨尊.<sup>2</sup>

This phrase, which proclaimed the birth of Buddhism, has been interpreted literally that Siddhartha had discovered himself as an existential being (Seong 2008, 95). Considering how he became a great teacher of humankind, however, it also carries the significance of announcing the dignity or subjectivity of human beings against the worldview of Brahmanism, which was the dominant ideology of the Indian society during then and was centered on nature or the gods. There has never been a more succinct and stronger phrase than this in declaring the humanistic nature of Buddhism.

Buddhism was a conceptual system that Shakyamuni proposed in order to fundamentally overcome the many contradictions (*go* 苦) the Indian society was facing around 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. While the previous philosophy of the

2. This famous phrase was widely disseminated after Yijing 義淨 of Tang translated *Genben shuo yiqie you bu pi nai ye zashi* 根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事 20 (T.24, 298a:11), and in the representative biographical material of Shakyamuni, *Abhiniṣkramaṇa sūtra* 33 (T.3, 808a:28), it is written as "I alone am honored among the heaven and the people" 天人中 唯我獨尊.

1. Representative studies on the thought and life of Wonhyo include Yi 1967; Go 1989; and Kim 2000.

Upanishads saw that all things in the universe including human beings had an eternal and unchanging atman (*a* 我), Shakyamuni said that there was no such thing as an independent and unique substance (*mubeop mua* 諸法無我) and that the objective world is not eternal and unchanging but endlessly transforming (*jehaeng musang* 諸行無常).

After six years of ascetic practice and contemplation, Shakyamuni discovered the principle of the birth and death and the operation of all things in the universe, or dharma. This was the dependent origination, or pratyasamutpāda (*yeonggi* 緣起), which is represented by the Four Truths (*saje* 四諦), which were the truth of dukkha, or suffering (*go* 苦); samudaya, or cause (*jip* 集); nirodha, or cessation (*myeol* 滅); and magga, or the path (*do* 道). The principle of dependent origination is that “because of A, A' originates,” and that “if A disappears, so will A'.” However, the Indians back then were not able to confront such changes and obsessed over all things in the universe, mistakenly believing they were fixed and unchanging. This eventually caused a contradiction between the endlessly changing objective world and the subjectivity that does not want to change. Because this contradiction is suffering (*go* 苦), life, which is to be born (*saeng* 生), grow old (*ro* 老), become ill (*byeong* 病), and die (*sa* 死), it is a continuation of pain. In addition, because one believes that there is a fixed substance (*jaa* 自我) and obsesses over it, the person is engulfed with kleśa (*beonnoe* 煩惱) and commit all kinds of actions (*karma*, or *eop* 業). Following the principle of resultant causal action and resultant effects (*ingwa eungbo* 因果應報), all the actions committed during one's life accumulate and become the cause that decides the resulting effect (vipāka, or *gwabo* 果報) on the next life. In this way, all living beings must continue to roll down the Six Realms of life (*yukdo* 六道), namely, the heavenly realm, the human realm, the realm of Asura, or malevolent spirits, the realm of hell, the realm of the hungry ghosts, and the animal realm, like a wheel of a wheelbarrow (*junhoe jeonsaeng* 輪迴轉生). Although there is a difference in degree, no path is completely free from suffering.

To break the chain of endless suffering, Shakyamuni taught that instead of performing rites towards the gods, humans must stop obsessing on their own accord, grow wisdom by practice, and discover the truth. The person who had completed wisdom through practice was Buddha, or enlightened one (*gakja* 覺者), and the state of having completely escaped the endless continuation of suffering is called liberation (*haetal* 解脫) or nirvana (*yeolban* 涅槃). In particular,

since nirvana means that the flames of anguish have been completely blown out, death is considered the completion of nirvana. This shows the unique view of life and death of Buddhism in which birth is the beginning of suffering and death is the liberation from suffering.

Shakyamuni taught the truth he realized for 45 years in the region around mid-stream Ganges, and at the age of 80, he went into his final summer retreat (*angeo* 安居) in the city he liked best, Vaishali. It was during then that pain more intense than death enveloped him but he endured it with superhuman will. His disciple serving him at that time, Ananda, fearing that he might die, pleaded with him to pass on to him whatever he had not taught yet. In response, Shakyamuni is said to have answered, “Rely on yourself and rely on the dharma” 自歸依 歸依於法.<sup>3</sup>

This phrase is widely used among Koreans in the form of “light your own candle and light the candle of dharma” (*ja deung myeong beop deung myeong* 自燈明 法燈明). Not only did Shakyamuni refuse to designate a successor within the Buddhist community but also told his followers not to even worship himself, even though he was the founder of Buddhism. Meanwhile, although the Buddhist community was completely reliant on the secular world for human and material resources, Shakyamuni requested the king in the secular world to protect (*oeho* 外護) the Buddhist dharma (*bulbeop* 佛法), at the same time he told his disciples not to become too close with or too distant with the king, as if being wary of a thief. In short, the quotation above was Shakyamuni's teaching that to be free from all authorities, be it religion or politics, and only rely on oneself and the universal truth, or dharma.

Buddhism sees all human beings as equal before the truth. One's status within the Buddhist community was decided depending on the order one enters the religion regardless of one's secular background, namely, one's caste, and the vipāka was determined by how qualified one was as a practitioner and how much the person had undergone practice. The ultimate vipāka of past deeds was Buddha, and according to the early Buddhist schools (*bupa bulgyo* 部派佛教), or Hīnayāna Buddhism (*soseung* 小乘), the only human being who could reach enlightenment was Shakyamuni, and all other practitioners could only reach the level beneath it, which was Arahān 阿羅漢.

3. *Dirgha Āgama* 2 (T.1, 15b:7); *Dirgha Āgama* 6, “Jeollyun seongwang suhaeng gyeong” (T.1, 39a:25).

Around the beginning of AD, however, the Mahāyāna Buddhism movement, which set out to completely transform the early Buddhist schools unfolded. This movement started to voice bold arguments that surpassed the previous concept of Buddha and developed into opposite directions. One was to deify the human Shakyamuni as a mysterious, god-like entity, and the other was to completely open the gates towards attaining Buddha-dhātu (Buddha-nature, or *bulseong* 佛性) to all practitioners: “All sentient beings have within them the nature to become Buddha” 一切衆生 悉有佛性.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, this phrase does not appear in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Yeolbangyeong* 涅槃經) of Hīnayāna Buddhism. It was instead added by Mahāyāna Buddhists when they were newly compiling the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. In China, Daosheng 道生 argued that even the icchantika can attain Buddha-dhātu (Chanti chengfo shup 闡提成佛說), and as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* was translated soon after that, all East Asian Buddhists from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onward responded with enthusiasm to the declaration that “all living beings could become Buddha.” Knowing this, Xuanzang 玄奘 asked his master, Jiexian 戒賢, right before returning home after 16 years of pursuing the truth in India, whether he could delete the passages of having no Buddha-nature (*mu bulseong* 無佛性 or *mu jongseong* 無種姓), mentioned in *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* (*Daeseung zhuangyan jing lun* 大乘莊嚴經論) as Chinese Buddhists would not believe them, to which Jiexian reprimanded him not to distort the truth.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, as Xuanzang and his disciples founded the Faxiang Order (*beopsangjong* 法相宗), which maintained the theory of classifying all living beings into five categories (*oseong gakbyeol seol* 五性各別說), which denied the possibility that some living beings could attain Buddha-dhātu based on the scriptures of the new Vijñāptivāda School (*sin yusik* 新唯識), conflict with the Yisheng School (*ilseungga* 一乘家), or the Ekayāna school, which allowed the attainment of Buddha-dhātu by all living beings based on the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, was inevitable.<sup>6</sup> Wonhyo's view of human beings was formed against the

background of these theories on Buddha-dhātu.

## Buddhist Terms on Human Beings

Wonhyo not only contemplated how to achieve completion of human dignity during his whole life but also devoted himself to saving his contemporaries who were religiously disadvantaged. He read the main Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures circulating in East Asia during them and left a vast collection of writings including over 70 kinds of 150 volumes. His writings, which are based on a deep understanding of various Buddhist philosophies he was well read in, evidence his true worth as a thinker representing East Asian Buddhism.

This section will attempt to grasp Wonhyo's view on humans by tracing words related to humans in his writings as well as the Buddhist texts he would have read.<sup>7</sup>

The term human 人間 already appears in ancient Chinese texts. In Buddhist texts, it appears in the Buddhist texts translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva (Gumarajip) in the early 5<sup>th</sup> century. As for the Sanskrit counterpart of the term, the following three seem most likely: the first is “manusya,” which translates to the people or human and refers to the Human Realm in the Five Realms (*ochwi* 五趣, *odho* 五道) in the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Beophwagyeong* 法華經).<sup>8</sup> The second is “nṛ,” which connotes male or hero and is the opposite of god or the heavens 天 as well as being one of the Six Realms. The third is “puruṣa,” which implies spirit and is variously translated as male, man, and official 士.

Since Wonhyo wrote a commentary on the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* translated into classical Chinese by Kumārajīva, he knew the word human, and examples of his use of the term in the remaining writings of Wonhyo amount less than 10, including Doctrinal Essentials of the Sūtra on the *Ascension of Maitreya* (*Mireuk sangsaeng jongyo*). Wonhyo's use of the term is limited to the

4. *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Daeban yeolbangyeong*) 6, “Yerae seongpum” (T.12, 402c:8-9).

5. Dullyun, *Commentary on the Yogācārabhūmisāstra* 13, *ha* (T.42, 615a:17-b:2). The meaning is unclear particularly towards the end of this passage, as if some letters have been left out in the process of transcription. This article follows the version commonly believed in academic circles. In academic circles, the interpretation is that Jiexian rebukes the cautious proposal of Xuanzang and lectures him to transmit the truth as he had taught.

6. For more on how the argument over *ilseungseol* 一性說 and *oseungseol* 五性說 unfolded and the main

points of dispute, see Tokiwa 1930, 221-77; Takemura 1982, 291.

7. For the lexical meaning of Buddhist terms, the following dictionaries were referenced: The Mochizuki Dictionary of Buddhism, A Dictionary of Buddhist Proper Names, and Dictionary of Buddhist Terms.

8. *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* 2 (T.9, 13a:20-26).

meaning of biological human beings or the world in which such human beings live.<sup>9</sup> He was not, however, interested in the biological human itself, or the human body, which was a finite being constituted by the four primary elements of earth, water, fire, and wind (*ji su hwa pung* 地水火風), the idea of which came from India. Instead, he contemplated the human pursuing truth, that is, the religious human being.

Meanwhile, the term that appears most frequently in Wonhyo's writings is *jungsaeng* 衆生. *Jungsaeng* is the plural term for the Sanskrit term *sattva* (*salta* 薩埵), which refers to all living things. Depending on the translator, *sattva* is also translated as sentient beings (*yujeong* 有情), which means all living beings that have emotions (*yukjeong* 六情) of joy (*hui* 喜), anger (*no* 怒), sorrow (*ae* 哀), pleasure (*rak* 樂), love (*ae* 愛), and maliciousness (*ak* 惡). In this case, it also contains the meaning of all beings that endlessly repeat the state of *kleśa*. In his remaining writings, Wonhyo clearly preferred to use all living beings (*jungsaeng*) compared to all sentient beings (*yujeong*) up to a ratio of nine to one.

Wonhyo's concept of all living beings was influenced by *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* and *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Yumagyeong* 維摩經) which were translated into classical Chinese by Kumārajīva. The statement of intent of *Doctrinal Essentials of Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Beophwajongyo*) refers to all living beings that correspond to all Buddhas in the endless time and space as *gudo sasaeng* 九道四生.<sup>10</sup> This term refers to the concept of all living beings as mentioned above. The term all living beings also appears in *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, where it carries the nuance of the religiously disadvantaged, who were the subject of edification by bodhisattvas.<sup>11</sup> Although Wonhyo left at least 2 types of commentaries on *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* including *Commentary on Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Yumagyeong so*) and *Doctrinal Essentials of Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Yumagyeong jongyo*), none of them remain today. As I will discuss later, Wonhyo's view of all living beings was focused on the religiously disadvantaged, which it shares with *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.

All living beings as the umbrella term for human beings can be further differentiated. The first is the term Buddha in the sense of enlightened being (*gakja* 覺者). But as Mahāyāna Buddhism ascended around the beginning

of AD, Buddha gradually became mystified into a transcendent being, and this Mahāyāna Buddhism became dominant in East Asia. Thus, in Buddhist scriptures translated into classical Chinese, Buddha is a divine entity with transcendent powers and an absolute entity of faith for Buddhists. The translation of Buddha (*bul* 佛, 仏, 佉) aptly shows how Buddha is human on the outside but a being harboring transcendent powers.

The second category is sage ones (*seongin* 聖人), which can be further divided into *yeongak* 緣覺, *seongmun* 聲聞, and *bosal* 菩薩. *Yeongak*, which is the translation of *pratyeka-buddha* and is also referred to as (*byeokji bul* 辟支佛), means one who has achieved enlightenment on their own (*dokgak* 獨覺). While it initially referred to Shakyamuni after he had become enlightened by himself and before he started to preach his learnings, Mahāyāna Buddhism focused on the latter meaning and criticized them as being selfish. *Seongmun* is the translation of *śrāvaka* and means people who achieved enlightenment after hearing the teachings of Shakyamuni but do not teach others. This term also originally meant Buddhist disciples who had heard Shakyamuni's teachings regardless of whether they renounced the secular world or not, but in Mahāyāna Buddhism, it became to mean those who renounced the secular world and devoted themselves only on their own attainment of enlightenment. Interestingly, in Jainism, which competed with Buddhism, the same term referred to those who had not renounced the secular world. The two terms of *yeonhak* and *seongmun* together are sometimes called two vehicles (*iseung* 二乘), which, as is well known, Mahāyāna Buddhism called in the derogatory term as *Hīnayāna*, or small vehicle (*soseung* 小乘), to criticize those who only pursued their own enlightenment.

*Bosal*, on the other hand, was what Mahāyāna Buddhism presented as the new type of human being. *Bosal* is a transliteration of *Bodhisattva*, which is the combination of *bodhi* (enlightenment) and *sattva* (all living beings). In primitive, or pre-sectarian, Buddhism and the multiple early Buddhist schools, the term referred to Siddhārtha while he was practicing between the age of 29, when he left his home, and the age of 35, which was when he became enlightened. Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, expanded this concept and called entities that delayed their enlightenment, which they could achieve, in order to devote themselves to guiding others, or all living beings, to enlightenment. Mahāyāna Buddhism was known to be the outcome of the movement to reform Buddhism led by followers who had not left home. Among these

9. *Doctrinal Essentials of the Sūtra on the Ascension of Maitreya* (Hanbul 1, 550b:9-10).

10. *Doctrinal Essentials of Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (Hanbul 1, 487c:8-10).

11. *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* 1 (T.14, 538a:18-19).

followers, bodhisattvas who had not left home were called gr̥ha-pati (*geosa* 居士), and the most famous gr̥ha-pati in Buddhist history was Vimalakirti (Yumageosa 維摩居士) of Vaishali, who is also the protagonist of *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. In *Vajra-samādhi Sūtra* (*Geumgang sammaegyong* 金剛三昧經), the production and circulation of which Wonhyo was deeply involved in, Beomhaeng jangja 梵行長者 appears as a Vimalakirti-like figure, and Wonhyo describes Beomhaeng jangja as a being whose inner world remained at the truth of the oneness of diverse teachings of Buddha (*ilmi* 一味) although his outside was secular.<sup>12</sup> It goes without saying that the exemplary Buddhist life Wonhyo pursued was that of Vimalakirti or Beomhaeng jangja.

The religious mission of bodhisattvas, or gr̥ha-pati, who were the main characters of Mahāyāna Buddhism, is concentrated in the phrase “to pursue enlightenment above and lead all living beings towards enlightenment below” 上求菩提 下化衆生. This phrase seems to have become widespread after Zongmi 宗密 used it during late Tang.<sup>13</sup> Wonhyo, preceded Zongmi by almost two centuries, said “expand the Buddhist dharma above and edify all living beings below” 上弘佛道 下化衆生,<sup>14</sup> which comes out in the writings of Zhiyi 智顛 and Jizang 吉藏, which Wonhyo referenced.<sup>15</sup> Although there is a slight difference in terms of expression, this shows that the focus of the concept of all living beings has moved from being an umbrella term for all human beings towards the religiously disadvantaged.

If bodhisattvas are the agents of edification, the living beings who are edified are called *beombu* 凡夫. Although its Sanskrit term, pṛthag-jana, refers to ordinary human beings, in Buddhism it refers to foolish and deluded people or those that are consumed by anguish. Wonhyo used the term *beombu* from time to time as a diametrically opposing term for sage or bodhisattva when mentioning the human relationships of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which was mediated by edification.

Finally, in relation to edification, there is the term *icchāntika* (*ilcheonje*

一闡提). *Ichchantika* refers to those who seek pleasure or those who only believe in the current life, which, in Buddhism, carries a negative meaning in that it refers to those who can no longer be saved from having severed the roots of virtue (*seongeun* 善根) or those who can never attain enlightenment. Ever since the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* was transmitted in early 5<sup>th</sup> century, it has been understood as given by East Asian Buddhists that all people including *icchāntika* possessed Buddha-dhātu (*ilseongseol* 一性說). But in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Xuanzang raises a theory based on reality called the theory of the five different inborn natures of all beings (*oseongseol* 五性說), which acknowledges that there are those without Buddha-dhātu. As religions orders such as Faxiang zong 法相宗 formed around this theory and treated it as a central doctrine, the debate over Buddha-dhātu became an important issue in East Asian Buddhism.

Table 1 below summarizes this section. The ideal of Buddhism was that all human beings were equal in front of the truth, or dharma, and that even those who did not believe in Buddhism at all, such as *icchāntika*, could attain Buddha-dhātu. However, the reality is that only very few people attain enlightenment, while the majority do not. The gap between the Buddhist ideal and reality was the difficult intellectual challenge Wonhyo faced.

Table 1. Buddhist Terms on Human Beings (Sanskrit)

	<i>cheon, sin deva</i>			
<i>jungsaeng, yujeong sattva</i>		<i>bucheo</i> Buddha	<i>seokjon</i> Śākya–muni, bhagavat	
			<i>bosal</i> Bodhisattva	<i>chulga bosal</i> <i>bosal</i> Bodhisattva
			<i>jaega bosal</i>	<i>geosa, jangja</i> gr̥ha–pati
	<i>in, ingan</i> <i>manuṣya</i> <i>nṛ</i> <i>puruṣa</i>	<i>seongin</i> <i>seongja,</i> <i>ārya-sattva</i>	<i>seongmun</i> <i>śrāvaka</i> <i>yeongak,</i> <i>clokgak,</i> <i>byeokjibul</i> pratyeka- buddha	
		<i>beombu</i> pṛthag-jana		
		<i>ilcheonje</i> <i>icchāntika</i>		
	<i>asura asura</i>			
	<i>jiok naraka</i>			
	<i>agwi preta</i>			
	<i>chukseang tiryag-yoni</i>			

12. *Geumgang sammaegyong non, ha* (Hanbul 1, 659b:17-20).

13. Zongmi, *Concise Commentary on the Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment, ha* 1 (T.39, 553b:17-18).

14. *Commentary on the Sūtra of the Primary Activities of Bodhisattvas, ha* (Hanbul 1, 503b:14-15).

15. Zhiyi, *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* 4, sang (T.33, 724b:15-17); *Mohe zhiguan* 1, sang (T.46, 6a:18); *Essentials of the Four Stages of Teaching, gwon* 7 (T.46, 744a:2-3). Jizang, *Treatise on the Hidden in the Lotus Sūtra* 6 (T.34, 413c:1-2); *Commentary on the Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra* 6 (T.34, 527c:8).

## All Human Beings are Equal: Doctrine of One Mind 一心思想

Among the many terms mentioned in the earlier section, *bosal*, or bodhisattva, and *jungsaeng*, or all living beings, appear most frequently in the writings of Wonhyo. These two lie at each end of the human relationship mediated through edification. Above all, Wonhyo focused on laying the philosophical grounds for this human relationship to be formed, which involved the exploration of the human spirit, or mind, as the agent of the world and destiny.

*Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty (Song gaoseng chuan)* relates the famous story of how in 650, Wonhyo, on his way to study abroad in Tang, drank water collected in a skull and became enlightened.<sup>16</sup>

At the moment of enlightenment, Wonhyo is said to have sung, “with the mind, all dharma arises, and without the mind, a cave and a tomb are not two” 心生故種種法生, 心滅故龕墳不二. Strictly speaking, this phrase, which is better known today as “everything depends on the mind” 一切唯心造, appears in the 80-volume *Avataṃsaka Sūtra (Hwaeomgyeong 華嚴經)* that was translated after the death of Wonhyo.<sup>17</sup> The song of his enlightenment is directly based on the phrase in the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra*, or the *Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith (Daeseung gisinnon 大乘起信論)*, “with the mind, all dharma arises, and without the mind, all dharma disappears” 心生則種種法生, 心滅則種種法滅.<sup>18</sup> In *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith (Gisinnon so)*, Wonhyo in interpreting the aforementioned phrase makes it clear that the objective world (*gyeonggye* 境界) does not actually exist independently but arises and disappears according to the subjective world (*mumyeongsin* 無明心).<sup>19</sup> In short, Wonhyo turned his gaze inward and investigated it deeply, which was also the process of rediscovering the *Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith*.

*Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra* (hereafter, *Awakening of Faith*), which was translated by Paramārtha (Jinje 眞諦) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century has been acclaimed as the best general Mahāyāna Buddhist text in East Asia. In Wonhyo's time, however, questions were raised in the Chinese Buddhist community over

whether it was truly composed by Aśvaghōṣa (Mamyong 馬鳴) of India, who was famous for being the founder of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In particular, the three masters of dharma of Sui, Zhiyi 智顛, Huiyuan 慧遠, and Jizang 吉藏, who greatly influenced Wonhyo, were either passive towards or uninterested in *Awakening of Faith* (Kawagaki 1981, 30). This atmosphere did not change much even during early Tang. None of the Buddhist monks of the Cien School (*Jaen hakpa* 慈恩學派) of the Faxiang Order (Beopsangjong 法相宗) including Xuanzang of the new Vijñānavāda School (*sinyusikhak* 新唯識學), who led the Buddhist community of Changan in the mid- to late 7<sup>th</sup> century, left behind a commentary on *Awakening of Faith*. Zhiyan of the Huayan School was no different. Despite having studied the school of Daśabhūmivyākhyāna (*jironhak* 地論學) and the school of Mahāyānasamgraha (*seomnonhak* 攝論學), which placed importance on *Awakening of Faith*, the relationship between his writings and *Awakening of Faith* is not clear.

Thus, the main Buddhist schools of thought that appeared from late in the Northern and Southern Dynasties to early Tang such as the Tiantai School, the Sanlun School, and the new Vijñānavāda School, and the Huayan School before Fazang 法藏 did not rely on *Awakening of Faith* that much (Nam 2004, 45-76). It was only after the skepticism around the authorship was overcome that it could be actively used, and Wonhyo was the pioneer who worked to dispel such misgivings.

Wonhyo, after declaring that *Awakening of Faith* was written by Aśvaghōṣa and translated by Paramārtha, went on to focus his research on it and left behind at least 6 types of writings. Out of these, 1 volume of *Separate Record on the Awakening of Faith (Gisinnon byeolgi* 起信論別記), 2 volumes of *Commentary on the Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith (Daeseung gisinnon so* 大乘起信論疏), and 1 volume of *Meaning of Two Obstructions (Ijangui* 二障義) remain today. Among these, the *Separate Record on the Awakening of Faith*, which is among his early writings, shows his unique perspective well. In it, Wonhyo defined *Awakening of Faith* as the treatise that could encompass the emptiness (*gong* 空), taught by the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Junggwannon* 中觀論) and *Dvādaśamukhaśāstra (Sibi mullon* 十二門論) and the existence (*yu* 有), that was taught in the *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra (Yugaron* 瑜伽論) and *Mahāyānasamgraha (Seopdaeseungnon* 攝大乘論). Because *Awakening of Faith* corresponded with the nature of the Way in this regard, Wonhyo highly praised it as being “the

16. *Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty* 4, “Uisang jeon” (T.50, 729a:05-16).

17. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 19 (T.10, 102a:29-b:01).

18. *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra* (T.32, 577b:22).

19. *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith, sang* (T.44, 214b:15-18).

supreme of all treatises and the commentary of all controversies.”<sup>20</sup> This indicates that Wonhyo focused on *Awakening of Faith* as the scriptural evidence to overcome the conflict between Buddhist texts translated before (*guyeok* 舊譯) and after (*sinyeok* 新譯) Xuanzang, particularly the conflict between emptiness and existence, or between *Mūlamadhyamakakārik* and Yogācāra, or Vijñānavāda.

Meanwhile, *Commentary on the Mahāyāna Awakening of Faith* (hereafter, *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*), which is widely known as *Commentary of the Eastern Land* (*Haedong so* 海東疏), saw the intention behind *Awakening of Faith* as being the “expansion of Buddhist dharma above and the edification to enlightenment of all living beings below.” In his interpretation, all living beings were unable to become enlightened due to skepticism (*uibok* 疑惑) and wicked obsessions (*sajip* 邪執). One Mind was therefore preached to eliminate the skepticism of the dharma, and the Two Aspects (*imun* 二門)—the aspect of tathatā (*jinyeomun* 眞如門) and the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga (*saengmyeolmun* 生滅門)—was preached to eliminate the skepticism of the aspects (*mun* 門).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, he also wrote that *Awakening of Faith* was the only treatise that bound the core teachings of the main Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures into one by the One-Mind-Two-Aspects system (*ilsim imun* 一心二門).<sup>22</sup>

*Commentary on the Awakening of Faith* is a good example of Wonhyo's thought, also referred to as the thought of One Mind (*ilsim sasang* 一心思想), which he established by deeply inquiring into the inner world of human beings through *Awakening of Faith*. At this point, let us take a look at the Wonhyo's Doctrine of One Mind by focusing on the *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith*. The following is a quote from Wonhyo, who saw Mahāyāna Buddhism as a problem of One Mind.

There is only One Mind in the dharma of Mahāyāna Buddhism and no other. Only ignorance (*mumyeong* 無明) deludes One Mind and gives rise to waves [kleśa, or *beonnoe* 煩惱] and causes [all living beings (*jungsang*)] to endlessly circulate through the Six Realms.<sup>23</sup>

While in Hīnayāna Buddhism, all dharmas (*ilchebeop* 一切法) have the intrinsic nature (*jache* 自體), in Mahāyāna Buddhism, all dharmas see only One Mind as the intrinsic nature. One Mind, as the origin of all things, embraced all dharmas in both the mundane and supramundane world, and because all dharmas were the mind of all living beings (*jungsaengsim* 衆生心), One Mind was none other than the mind of all living beings.<sup>24</sup>

In One Mind, there is the aspect of tathatā and the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga. The aspect of tathatā means the state in which all dharmas have no utpāda-bhaṅga and is in its original tranquil state. There are grounds for all living beings to become enlightened in this state, but most of the living beings remain isolated from enlightenment during their lives in the real world. The aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga came into being in order to explain this gap between the ideal, i.e., that they can become enlightened, and the reality, in which they remain unenlightened. In other words, the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga was the state in which the original enlightenment (*bongak* 本覺), or the nature (*che* 體) of One Mind, was arising and ceasing due to the action of ignorance. Because the One Mind of all living beings were contaminated by ignorance or kleśa (*beonnoe* 煩惱), they were endlessly being reborn in the Six Realms in the unenlightened state (*bulgak* 不覺). This state in which all living being's innate nature of Tathāgata (*yeorae* 如來) was obscured by ignorance was called Tathāgata-garbha (*yeoraejang* 如來藏).<sup>25</sup> Although the aspect of tathatā and the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga have been explained separately, the two aspects are inseparable and form One Mind. The Two Aspects each summarize all dharmas in that the aspect of tathatā is the universal aspect (*tongsang* 通相) of all dharmas and the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga is the particular aspect (*byeolsang* 別相) of all dharmas, both of which are inseparable.<sup>26</sup>

Meanwhile, *Awakening of Faith*, in writing of the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga, regards the eighth consciousness, the ālaya vijñāna, as having both the true, constant side and the false, deluded side together (*jinnmang hwahapsik* 眞妄和合識)<sup>27</sup> and therefore introduces the ninth consciousness, the amalavijñāna, which is the pure consciousness before contamination, as the theoretical

20. *Separate Record on the Awakening of Faith, bon* (*Hanbul* 1, 678a:10-19).

21. *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith, sang* (*Hanbul* 1, 701b:7-c:23).

22. *Ibid.*, (*Hanbul* 1, 698b:22-c:5).

23. *Ibid.*, (*Hanbul* 1, 701b:24-c:2).

24. *Ibid.*, (*Hanbul* 1, 704a:8-14).

25. *Ibid.*, (*Hanbul* 1, 704c:16-705a:6).

26. *Ibid.*, (*Hanbul* 1, 705a:17-b:1).

27. *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra* (T.32, 576b:7-9).



ultimate consciousness, like the scholars studying Mahāyānasamgrah did. Because Wonhyo's philosophical basis was *Awakening of Faith*, his point of view was also close to the school of Samparigraha, which was the old Vijñānavāda School's viewpoint of Mahāyānasamgrah. However, Wonhyo did not stop there and also actively attempted to reconcile the new Vijñānavāda School of Xuanzang, which argued that the fundamental consciousness was the eighth consciousness, which was the contaminated and deluded state (*mangsik* 妄識).

*Awakening of Faith* and the old Vijñānavāda School argue that human beings were originally pure and innocent but came into being and ceased to be because they became contaminated later. Xuanzang, however, regarded this to be a jump of logic. If human beings were truly pure and innocent, how can they be contaminated? Doesn't the fact that human beings can be contaminated mean that they had reason to be contaminated in the first place? Eventually Xuanzang criticized the old Vijñānavāda School by putting forth the originally pure and innocent ninth consciousness and argued that the eighth consciousness was the basic consciousness of all things and was an already contaminated, deluded state. These two views on human beings were a major difference between the old Vijñānavāda School and the new Vijñānavāda School. It was also the conflict between the ideal of Buddhism and the reality the Buddhist community faced.

Wonhyo's position was clear. He limited the ālaya-vijñāna as the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga among the Two Aspects of One Mind and made it clear that ālaya-vijñāna was the lower concept of One Mind.<sup>28</sup> It should be kept in mind, though, that Wonhyo only discussed the difference of ālaya-vijñāna and tathāgata-garbha in the aspect of utpāda-bhaṅga. Tathāgata-garbha, which was the key concept of *Awakening of Faith*, cannot be seen in the discussion of the aspect of tathatā. In this sense, while *Awakening of Faith* may be described as preaching the thought of tathāgata-garbha, the thought of *Awakening of Faith* is not the thought of tathāgata-garbha. As Go Ikjin (1989, 237) pointed out, the conventional understanding that the thought of *Awakening of Faith* was the thought of Tathāgata-garbha was Fazang's view of *Awakening of Faith*, not of Wonhyo.

It is worth noting Gyunyeo 均如 of the Hwaeom order during the 10<sup>th</sup> century. No other Korean Buddhist monk has quoted Wonhyo as much as

Gyunyeo has. Gyunyeo's writings are valuable material in elucidating the thought of Wonhyo, for some of his quotes are from Wonhyo's writings that do not remain until the present day. Gyunyeo particularly points out the decisive difference between Wonhyo and Fazang in their understanding of *Awakening of Faith*. According to Gyunyeo, while Wonhyo established the theory of the Three Truths (*samjeseol* 三諦說) which opened the Two Aspects in One Mind but saw One Mind as separate from the aspect of tathatā, Fazang equated One Mind with the aspect of tathatā and thus established the theory of the Two Truths (*ijeseol* 二諦說).<sup>29</sup>

In sum, the final point Wonhyo reached after investigating the inner world of human beings was the concept of One Mind. Therefore, calling Wonhyo's thought, which was based on *Awakening of Faith*, the Doctrine of One Mind is more appropriate, which calls it the thought of tathāgata-garbha. *Awakening of Faith* writes that according to One Mind, which was the origin of all things, all dharmas continue to repeat coming to existence and ceasing to exist.<sup>30</sup> This was the point sung by Wonhyo's aforementioned song of enlightenment. According to Wonhyo, the ultimate origin of all things in the universe was One Mind. The objective world did not exist independently separately from the perception of human beings. All things of the universe were the endless circulation of death and rebirth (*yujeon* 流轉) of One Mind.

All living beings were no exception. From the perception that they were also the endless reincarnation of One Mind, all living beings were essentially equal, and everyone could be saved from suffering by the teachings of Buddha. Sage ones were those who had completely recovered their pure and innocent One Mind, and unenlightened beings were those whose One Mind was obscured or distorted by ignorance and kleśa. Instead of opposition and conflict between these two, it was recommended to act for the benefit of other people (*itahaeng* 利他行), and bodhisattvas were the sage ones who practiced this. Bodhisattva, the ideal human being proposed by Mahāyāna Buddhism, delayed their own enlightenment and valued the edification of all living beings above all other values. As for all living beings, they must eliminate the two hindrances blocking their enlightenment—the impediment to wisdom (*jiae* 智碍) and the

28. *Separate Record on the Awakening of Faith, bon* (Hanbul 1, 682c:11-20).

29. Gyunyeo, *Master Gyunyeo's Sub-commentary on the Huayan jiaofen ji 3* (Hanbul 4, 324c:2-9).

30. *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpādaśāstra* (T.32, 577b:16-23).

afflictive hindrance (*beonnoeae* 煩惱) in order to recover the original state of One Mind. Unenlightened beings, upon eliminating the ignorance and *kleśa* by the edification of the bodhisattva, can finally recover their pure One Mind.

### The Redemption of Mankind of the Gṛha-pati: Conduct of Non-obstruction 無碍行

After deeply reflecting upon the inner world of human beings, Wonhyo reached the conclusion that all life and all human beings—Buddhists as well as even the *icchantika* who did not know Buddhism or who knew it but did not believe and even criticized it—could be saved from the reincarnating life of suffering by Buddhism. The remaining task for him, then, was to realize his view that humans were equal based on Buddhist ideals, which was the religious mission of the actual world.

In this regard, the fact that the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Buddhist historian Iryeon 一然 named the biography of Wonhyo in the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa*) “Unfettered Wonhyo” (Wonhyo bulgi 元曉不羈)<sup>32</sup> has significant implications. The Chinese character 羈 means bridle, gag, or reins; thus this title means that Wonhyo was not tied down by. Indeed, after renouncing secular life, Wonhyo did not hesitate to do unconventional actions without being tied down by the Buddhist precepts. His unconventional life and return to the secular world should be reexamined from the perspective of the ideal of Mahāyāna Buddhism: to practice the edification of all living beings.

Wonhyo's view of precepts can be examined first against the backdrop of the way precepts are thought of in East Asian Buddhism. During the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the scholars of the Daśabhūmivākyāna of the Southern Branch (*namdo pa* 南道派) attempted to manage the Buddhist community according to the *Dharmagupta-vinaya* (*Sabunyul* 四分律). However,

31. In *Doctrine of Two Hindrances* (*Ijangi* 二障義) Wonhyo assigned the impediment to wisdom (*jiae* 智碍) and the afflictive hindrance (*beonnoeae* 煩惱) of the “Awakening of Faith” School to the esoteric level (*eummilmun* 隱密門), and the hindrance of the knowable (*sojjjang* 所知障) and the afflictive hindrance (*beonnoejang* 煩惱障) of the Yogācāra School to the exoteric level (*hyeollyomun* 顯了門) and placed the former as encompassing the latter from a superior position. For more detail, see Ōchō 1940.

32. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 4, “Wonhyo bulgi” (T.49, 1006a:7).

Huiyuan 慧遠 of Jingyingsi 淨影寺, who represented the Southern Branch, did not remain at *Dharmagupta-vinaya* and valued the Three Consummate and Immaculate Precepts for Bodhisattvas (*sam chwiyeong gye* 三聚淨戒) (Soun 1993). As the Northern and Southern Dynasties transitioned to Sui and bodhisattva-monks (*bosal seung* 菩薩僧) were in demand, his contemporary, Zhiyi 智顛 of the Tiantai School also responded to the call of the times and studied the precepts of the *Brahmājāla Sūtra* (*Beommang gye* 梵網戒) in earnest from the perspective of a pravarjita-bodhisattva (Satō 1986, 412-17). Following them, Jizang 吉藏 of the Sanlun School 三論學派 argued that for the realization of Buddhist ideals, it was meaningless to distinguish those who had renounced the secular world and those who had not.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the three masters of dharma who were active from the late Northern and Southern Dynasties focused on the precepts of the *Brahmājāla Sūtra* as the bodhisattva vows.

In contrast, Daoxuan 道宣, the monk representing the Vinaya School (*yul seung* 律僧) of early Tang, believed that the Buddhist followers who had renounced the secular world were going about presenting themselves as Mahāyāna Buddhists and living as if belittling Hinayāna vows, which eventually bought contempt from ordinary people and led to control and interference by the state. Daoxuan therefore argued that in order to be respected in the secular world and be free from state interference, Buddhist practitioners who left behind the household life of a layperson should maintain a life that strictly abided by the precepts. This was expressed as emphasizing the Hinayāna Buddhist vows centered on *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (Kansho 1939, 13-19; Satō 1986, 84-88; 1986, 138-39).

The research on *Brahmājāla Sūtra* (*Beommanggyong* 梵網經), which had been stagnant for some time from the research focusing on *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* during early Tang, drew attention in the High Tang. Wonhyo was the pioneer of this trend. The fact that the precepts of Silla transformed from being based on *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* during its middle-ancient period to being based on the precepts of the *Brahmājāla Sūtra* during the Unified Silla phase can also be traced to Wonhyo's research on the *Brahmājāla Sūtra*.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile,

33. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

34. Choe Wonsik acknowledges the status of Wonhyo's research in the history of thought but does not see his view of precepts as having influenced the monks of Silla during the period of unification as that large. See Choe 1999, 96-98.

research on the *Brahmājāla Sūtra* started in the Nara period of Japan and was largely influenced by Silla's monks, especially by Wonhyo's *Commentary on Brahmājāla Sūtra* (Ishida 1930, 120-22), and finally in early 9<sup>th</sup> century, Saichō 最澄 proceeded to establish a separate ordination platform for Mahāyāna Buddhism (*daeseung gyedan* 大乘戒壇) based on *Brahmājāla Sūtra* (Tamara 1995, 52-60).<sup>35</sup> In short, Wonhyo played an important role in promoting the interest and research on *Brahmājāla Sūtra* in the East Asian Buddhist sphere around the late 7<sup>th</sup> century.

*Brahmājāla Sūtra* maintains a critical stance towards the Hīnayāna Śrāvaka vows to the extent that it describes abandoning Mahāyāna vows and taking the Śrāvaka vows as committing a sin.<sup>36</sup> Instead, *Brahmājāla Sūtra* assumes that all living beings have innate Buddha-dhātu and propounds that the vows they must receive to attain Buddha-dhātu (*seongbul* 成佛) are the 10 Great Vows and the 48 Lighter Vows (*sip jung sasippal gyeong gye* 十重四十八輕戒).<sup>37</sup> It also writes that anyone regardless of whether or not they had renounced the secular world or whether they were kings or slaves can receive these vows (*sugye* 受戒).<sup>38</sup> Unlike Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, one could even vow in front of a statue of Buddha and take the vows alone if there was no one to give them.<sup>39</sup>

There are known to be 5 or 6 types of Wonhyo's writings on precepts including the *Commentary on Brahmājāla Sūtra*. Among the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva-saṃvara, Wonhyo was deeply interested in and conducted research on the precepts in the Brahmājāla Sūtra. In other words, Wonhyo placed more value on the precepts in the *Brahmājāla Sūtra*, which was a new Mahāyāna Bodhisattva vows that transcended the distinction between renouncing the secular world or not, compared to the traditional *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, which strictly differentiated the religious community and the secular world. One of the most important features of the Buddhist thought of Wonhyo is *hwajaeng* 和諍, or reconciling doctrinal controversies, but this does not apply

to his view on precepts. Wonhyo criticized the Hīnayāna Śrāvaka vows, i.e., the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, from the standpoint of the precepts of *Brahmājāla Sūtra*, which were purely Mahāyāna vows.

A large difference between *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and the precepts of *Brahmājāla Sūtra* is in the criteria judging whether the precepts were abided by. The former looked at the objective acts that are expressed externally from the perspective of the regulations of the Buddhist Community, while the latter looked at the internal motivation, or the mind. The edification of all living beings, which Wonhyo regarded as the most important internal motivation, was the standard in judging whether the precepts had been kept. For Wonhyo, practicing the edification of all living beings was a higher religious act than abiding by the precepts.<sup>40</sup>

Interestingly, this perception resembles the practice of the edification of all living beings of Vimalakīrti. Above all, *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* writes in respect to the traditional upasampada, or monastic ordination (*gujokgye* 具足戒), that the place where bodhicitta arose was the place to renounce the secular world and the place of the upasampada.<sup>41</sup> According to the chapter on upāya in *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, as part of the edification of the all living beings, Vimalakīrti could go into a brothel and reveal the faults of desire, go into a bar and achieve his intentions, and go into a Go-game clubhouse and edify the people there.<sup>42</sup> Around 650, when Wonhyo was attempting to study abroad in Tang, he learned *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* from the Goguryeo monk Bodeok 普德.<sup>43</sup> Thus the freewheeling acts he displayed upon returning to Gyeongju after giving up studying abroad is not unrelated to the practice of edifying all living beings of Vimalakīrti.

On the other hand, a Vimalakīrti-like figure that appears in *Vajra-samādhi Sūtra*, which was formed during mid-7<sup>th</sup>-century Silla, is Beomhaeng jangja. Wonhyo described Beomhaeng jangja as a person who was a secular person on the outside but whose inner world dwelled on the truth of the oneness (*ilmi* 一味).<sup>44</sup> The Ipsiljepum 入實際品 chapter of *Vajra-samādhi Sūtra* also

35. Saichō built a separate ordination platform for Mahāyāna Buddhism to make the Tendai Order independent from the Six Schools of Nara Buddhism. Scholars have focused early on that he quoted Wonhyo's *Bosalgye bonji beomyogi* 菩薩戒本持犯要記 in *Xianjielun* 顯戒論. See Shioiri Ryōdō 1983, 20.

36. *Brahmājāla Sūtra. ha* (T.24, 1005c:05-07).

37. *Ibid.*, (T.24, 1004a:23-1009c:04).

38. *Ibid.*, (T.24, 1004b:07-10).

39. *Ibid.*, (T.24, 1006c:14-15).

40. For more on the Wonhyo's thoughts on precepts, see Nam 2001, 251-82.

41. *Vimalakīrti Sūtra, sang* (T.14, 541c:25-27).

42. *Vimalakīrti Sūtra, sang* (T.14, 539a:15-29).

43. *Collected Works of State Preceptor Daegak* 17, "Godaesan Gyeongboksa biraebangjang ye Bodeok seongsa yeong" (*Hanbul* 4, 559a:10-18); *Collected Works of State Preceptor Daegak* 19, "Do Bannyongsan Jeongbuksa ye Bodeok seongsa bibang guji" (*Hanbul* 4, 563c:16-20).

44. *Geumgang sammaegyeong non, ha* (*Hanbul* 1, 659b:17-20).

harbors the intention of transcending the distinction between renouncing and not renouncing the secular world to become a monk. This was the new demand of the Buddhists who had not renounced the secular world towards the management of the Buddhist community, which had been led by those who had renounced the secular world. It therefore argued that those who could not be seen by traditional standard as having renounced the secular world, namely, those who did not don monks' robes or keep the Prātimokṣa or participate in Upavasatha (*posal* 布薩), reaped achievements by doing pravāranā (*jaja* 自恣) of effortless non-doing (*muwi* 無爲) with their own mind (*jasim* 自心).<sup>45</sup> Regarding this, Wonhyo agreed, writing that “the duties are judged with one's own mind without being restrained by the precepts of the religious body.”<sup>46</sup>

In contrast, according to *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, all acts such as a Buddhist monk sleeping in the house of a person in the secular world, singing with an instrument, or wearing a sword were all prohibited acts, and bars and brothels were banned from entering as a Buddhist monk. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Yeolbangyeong* 涅槃經) also wrote that people who go to frequent bars or brothels or Go-game clubhouses must be banished from the Buddhist community.<sup>47</sup> Both *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* were Buddhist texts that Jajang 慈藏 relied on when reorganizing the Buddhist community. This, the fact that Wonhyo's action contradicts the precepts to avoid wrongdoings (*geumgye* 禁戒) of these texts implies that the view on precepts of Wonhyo and Jajang were distinctly different.

As aforementioned, Wonhyo regarded the criteria judging whether the precepts were kept or violated as the inner motivation, or the subjective mind. This meant to respect the individual dignity of the each practitioner and leave it to their free will. When Iryeon wrote the title of Wonhyo's biography as “Wonhyo was not tied down by,” he was pointing out that Wonhyo, as a practicing monk who had renounced the secular world, was not bound by the precepts of the Buddhist community. For Wonhyo, edifying all living beings was more noble than any other value, and after acting as if there were nothing he could not do if it was to edify all living beings, Wonhyo finally met Princess Yoseok, who bore

him a son.<sup>48</sup>

According to *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, however, violating the precept of not committing carnality (*bulsaeumgye* 不邪淫戒) was a pārājika (*barai joe* 波羅夷罪), and those who committed pārājika could not reside with other followers who had renounced the secular world nor could they take the vows.<sup>49</sup> Wonhyo did not compromise with the Buddhist community that followed the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and returned to the secular world on his own accord to become a gr̥ha-pati. He then devoted himself to edifying all living beings as a gr̥ha-pati, or a bodhisattva who has not left home just as Vimalakīrti of *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* and Beomhaeng jangja of *Vajra-samādhi Sūtra* did, and focused on the precepts of *Brahmājāla Sūtra* as a new norm of everyday life that did not differentiate between Buddhist monk (*seung* 僧) and the people of the secular world (*sok* 俗).

The following entry related to the edification of all living beings by Wonhyo in *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* is worth noting:

After Wonhyo had already lost the precepts and had a son, Seolchong 薛聰, he dressed in the clothes of secular people and called himself Soseong Geosa 小姓居士. A large gourd which clowns wore when dancing happened to come into his hands, and because it was strangely shaped, he made it into a tool in that shape. Based on the phrase of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* that said “all those who are not hindered by anything can escape life and death by going one path” 一切無碍人 一道出生死, he called it on-obstruction (*muae* 無碍) and made a song of it, which he disseminated into the world. From early on he sang and danced with this across numerous villages and edified the people, upon which even the poor and those no different from monkeys all learned of the title of Buddha and thus were able to say *namu* 南無. Thus was the extent of Wonhyo's edification.<sup>50</sup>

As this shows, Wonhyo named his practice to edify the all living beings as “non-obstruction” (*muae* 無碍), which was a formalized version of the thought of one vehicle (*ilseung sasang* 一乘思想) in *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the

45. *Vajra-samādhi Sūtra* 1 (T.9, 370b:4-8).

46. *Geumgang sammae gyeongnon, jung* (Hanbul 1, 647a:3-6).

47. *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* 7 (T.12, 403c:04-06)

48. For more on Wonhyo's marriage with Princess Yoseok, see Nam 1998, 147-58.

49. *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* 1 (T.22, 570c:07-09).

50. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 4, “Wonhyo bulgi” (T.49, 1006b:10-16).

51. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 5, *Sajepum* (T.9, 429b:19).

entry that Wonhyo went around countless villages and edified by song and dance is also one of the many upāya used by bodhisattvas to edify all living beings in *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.<sup>52</sup> We can thus see that Wonhyo also focused on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* as his textual basis for edifying all living beings.

According to the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, Wonhyo stopped writing at the chapter of Siphochyangpum 十廻向品 while writing *Hwaeomgyeong so* 華嚴經疏 when staying at Bunhwangsa.<sup>53</sup> Siphochyangpum preaches that the advance into the state of enlightenment by transferring all the “acts that benefit the self and others” (自利行 利他行) onto all living beings (*hoehyang* 廻向), which was repeated in the earlier part of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. In short, *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* strongly implies that the reason Wonhyo stopped writing what would have been his masterpiece was to edify all living beings.<sup>54</sup>

The stage of emphasizing the edification of all living beings is called the ten stages of transferring one's merit to others (*sip hoehyang wi* 十廻向位) and corresponds to the 31<sup>st</sup> to the 40<sup>th</sup> stage of the 52 stages practiced by bodhisattvas. The 41<sup>st</sup> stage right above the ten stages is called the first land of extreme joy (*choji* 初地), and according to *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, bodhisattvas at this stage (*choji bosal*) were able to see the Buddha-dhātu of all living beings with their own eyes and had supernatural powers such as splitting themselves into 100 selves.<sup>55</sup> Wonhyo was said to have shown the miracle of splitting himself into 100 selves during a lawsuit.<sup>56</sup> In this way, Wonhyo carried out the altruistic conduct of non-obstruction (*muae haeng*) to all living beings as a bodhisattva at the stage of the first land of extreme joy.

Among all living beings, Wonhyo was especially interested in the lower class or the people directly producing goods. In fact, most of the people he came into contact were the direct-production class, such as the urban poor, the straw-shoes seller and his wife, who was a temple slave, people farming slash-and-burn

fields, and butchers. In order to edify them, one had to leave the temple, where strict precepts had to be kept, and go into the everyday lives of ordinary people, which is what Wonhyo did.

For instance, when the mother of a servant who was of a lowly class died, Wonhyo carried out the funeral together and bestowed precepts (*gye* 戒) to the deceased and wrote a written prayer for the deceased.<sup>57</sup> He also taught how to gain insight of dharma through a spade (*sapgwon beop* 鍤觀法) to Eomjang, the farmer of slash-and-burn fields,<sup>58</sup> in which the spade was a farming tool. As Hyegong and Daean, who were companions of Wonhyo, edified all living beings using a basket for carrying dirt (*samtaegi*) and the wooden rice bowl used by monks (*barittae*), Wonhyo also used the language and tools of ordinary people. As a result, the forms of edification became inevitably as various as their lives. The biography of Wonhyo in *Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty* also aptly points this out in the phrase, “his edification of people as no consistency.”<sup>59</sup> It also concluded that Wonhyo's conduct of non-obstruction greatly contributed to the dissemination of Buddhism among the lower class of Silla.

The upāya of edifying all living beings that Wonhyo proposed was the faith of Pure Land (*jeongto* 淨土). In particular, the conditions he presented in order to be reborn in the Pure Land, which was the ideal of Buddhism, was as simple and concise as to “listen to the names of the scriptures (*gyeongmyeong* 經名) with one's ears and recite the names of Buddha with one's mouth.”<sup>60</sup> However, he recommended Pure Land faith but did not believe that Pure Land was a space that actually existed. According to Wonhyo, “the contaminated mundane world of suffering (*yeto* 穢土) and the Pure Land of Buddha (*bulgukto* 佛國土) are originally of one mind,”<sup>61</sup> and attempted to locate the Pure Land in the inner world of human beings. This was because he directly confronted the existential problem of all living beings who anguished in the actual world instead of an unverifiable ideal of the next life. Thus, he reduced all things as

52. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 25, *Sipjipum* (T.9, 556c:03). Here, the many upāya (*bangpyeon* 方便) that the bodhisattva at the stage difficult to attain (*nanseungji* 難勝地) can use to edify all living beings are presented. Among them is “*girak gamu huiso huano*” 妓樂歌舞 戲笑歡娛.

53. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 4, “Wonhyo bulgi” (T.49, 1006b:19-20).

54. It has been pointed out early on that the Siphochyangpum of *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* motivated Wonhyo to set out to edify the public (Kim 1987, 141-46).

55. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* 23, *Sipjipum* (T.9, 547b:14-21).

56. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 4, “Wonhyo bulgi” (T.49, 1006b:20-21).

57. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 4, “Sabok bul eon” (T.49, 1007b:02-06).

58. *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* 5, “Gwangdeok Eomjang.” (T.49, 1012c:13-16). Although the edition of 1512 writes this as “*jaenggwanbeop*” 鍤觀法, I have followed the edition of 1394 and used “*sapgwonbeop*” 鍤觀法 considering the context.

59. *Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty* 4, “Wonhyo” (T.50, 730b:19-22).

60. *Commentary of the Teachings of Amitābhā* (Hanbul 1, 562c:12-22).

61. *Doctrinal Essentials of the Sukhāvativyūha* (Hanbul 1, 553c:15-16).

an issue of the mind and attempted to realize the Pure Land in actual reality by awakening to the pure and innocent One Mind of the self.

Thus, Wonhyo's view of human beings was of an equality among humans based on the axis of the religious relationship between bodhisattvas and unenlightened beings, and after he returned to the secular world as a bodhisattva who has not left home, or gr̥ha-pati, he indeed devoted himself to edifying all living beings, particularly focusing on the socially disadvantaged. Wonhyo was consequently respected by the ordinary people, which was enough to mystify his existence. The earliest biographical material that was erected in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the stele of Goseonsa (Goseonsa bi高仙寺碑), speaks of the miracle Wonhyo conducted. When Wonhyo was staying in Goseonsa of Gyeongju, he saw the fire of Shengshan temple (Seongsensa 聖善寺) of Changan 長安 in Tang and extinguished it by spraying water in a bottle (Nam 1992, 6). Given that Shengshansi was a temple built after Wonhyo died,<sup>62</sup> this miracle was a myth created by later generations. Wonhyo's sacralization was already much in progress at least by the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, and he was called a divine monk (*sinseung* 神僧)<sup>63</sup> and many stories of the miracles he performed were even spread to China by the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>64</sup>

## Implications in Intellectual History

The sections above has examined what Wonhyo 元曉 (617-686), who was the leading Buddhist thinker of East Asia, thought regarding the fundamental question of "what is human/beings?" and how he lived in order to realize those ideals. In place of a conclusion, this section will contemplate the significance of his view on humans, which ran through his life and thought, has in intellectual history.

Wonhyo's view on humans begins from the Buddhist worldview, which is centered on human beings. In particular, Wonhyo conducted an in-depth investigation of the One Mind, which was focused on the origin of all things

in the universe in *Awakening of Faith*, the representative Mahāyāna Buddhist discourse. According to Wonhyo, all humans were essentially equal in that they were the endless reincarnations of the One Mind. He acknowledged, however, that there was a difference between bodhisattvas and all living beings, that is, between enlightened ones and unenlightened beings, and urged the bodhisattvas to perform altruistic conducts/that benefited others for the edification of all living beings, who were the religiously disadvantaged. In addition, he emulated Vimalakīrti after returning to the secular world and devoted himself to the practice of edifying all living beings, which he himself called non-obstruction.

Wonhyo's view that all humans were equal and his altruistic bodhisattva practices are significant in that he both sought the direction Unified Silla needed to pursue right after unification in the Buddhist society of equality and practiced it as well. The fact that the royal family, which led the unification of the three kingdoms, acknowledged the marriage between Wonhyo and Princess Yoseok and appointed their son, Seolchong 薛摠, shows that Wonhyo's view of humans and his conduct of edifying all living beings met the demands of the times. The 9<sup>th</sup>-century composers of the stone epigraphs including the stele of Goseonsa focused on the fervent commemoration and sacralization of Wonhyo by Buddhist followers, and in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, Zanning (Channyong 贊寧), the Chinese Buddhist historian, was deeply impressed by the passionate writing activities and support given to him by the royal family. The Buddhist historian Iryeon of 13<sup>th</sup>-century Goryeo attributed the dissemination of Buddhism to the bases of the society of Silla to Wonhyo.

Interestingly, Wonhyo's practice of edifying all living beings was to realize the Buddhist ideal world, or Pure Land, in the minds, not to improve the material lives of the ordinary people. It differed from the Sui Buddhist monk Xinxing 信行, who established a financial fund for ordinary people, or from the Japanese monk Gyōki 行基, who built bridges.<sup>65</sup> While Wonhyo also looked straight at the realistic circumstances of the lower class, he focused on urging their inner religious awakening instead of improving the external environment of their lives. The awareness that such social projects were not the original mission of Buddhism played a role; it is possible, however, that the more direct reason was that he regarded such measures for the livelihood of the

62. *Chronicle of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*, gwon 40 (T.49, 372b:21).

63. "Wolgwangsa Wollang seonsa daebo seongwang tapbi," in *Comprehensive Collection of Korean Epigraphy*, sang, p. 84.

64. *Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty* 4, "Wonhyo" (T.50, 730b:19-22).

65. On the relationship between Wonhyo and Gyōki, see Yoshida 1981.

people including social projects as the responsibility of the secular authorities. The union between Wonhyo and Princess Yoseok at the very least symbolizes a cooperative relationship based on the allocation of roles between Buddhism and politics.

Wonhyo lived during a period when doctrinal study of Buddhism was in full blossom. Like most of the Buddhist monk-scholars, he also committed himself only to inquiring into the inner world of humans from a Vijñānavāda perspective and did not comment particularly on the natural world surrounding human beings or their bodies. The One Mind he understood as the origin of all things was a mind universal to all human beings. In that sense, his view of humans can be regarded as the view of humans of doctrinal Buddhism. It was 100 to 200 years later, in Seon Buddhism of the latter period of Silla, that the focus shifted from a universal human mind, or One Mind, to the individual minds, or self 自我 of the followers and the body's value was newly discovered, and that physical labor was elevated to a form of cultivation (Nam 2021, 294-337).

Translated by Jong Woo PARK and Boram SEO

## Glossary

Amitābhā 阿彌陀

Aśvaghōṣa 馬鳴

Baekje 百濟

Bodhisattva 菩薩

*Brahmajāla Sūtra* 梵網經

Buddha-dhātu 佛性

Conduct of No-Obstruction 無碍行

*Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* 四分律

Ekayāna 一乘

Fazang 法藏

*Geumgang sammaegyeong non* 金剛三昧經論

*Gisinnon byeolgi* 起信論別記

*Gisinnon sol/Commentary on the Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論疏

Goguryeo 高句麗

gṛha-pati 居士

*Huayan/Avatamsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經

*Hwaeomgyeong so* 華嚴經疏

Hwajaeng 和諍

Ilsim/One Mind 一心

Iryeon 一然

kleśa 煩惱

*Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* 大乘涅槃經

Māhāyāna 大乘

Mahāyāna Bodhisattva-saṃvara 大乘菩薩戒

*Mahāyāna-sraddhotpādaśāstra/Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論

Paramārtha 真諦

Pure Land 淨土/極樂

Silla 新羅

Tathāgata-garbha 如來藏

tathatā 眞如

Two Aspects 二門

upāya 方便

utpāda-bhaṅga 生滅

*Vajra-samādhi Sūtra* 金剛三昧經

Vijñāptivāda 唯識論

Vimalakīrti 維摩

Vipāka 果報

Xuanzang 玄奘

Yogachara/Vijnanavada 瑜伽/唯識

Yoseok 瑤石

Wonhyo/Weonhyo 元曉

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## Abstract

This article looks at how the prominent East Asian Buddhist thinker Wonhyo viewed humans and how he practiced his thoughts. While Buddhism proclaimed humanism, it is paradoxically hard to find any Buddhist texts discussing humans. Wonhyo, who left behind a vast collection of writings of more than 70 copies and 150 volumes, is no exception. In terms of methodology, the first two sections of the present article cover the background to understand Wonhyo’s view of human beings. Section 2 looks at the humanistic character of Buddhism; Section 3 looks at all of the words related to human beings in Wonhyo’s writings and summarizes their definitions as well as their use by Wonhyo; Section 4 clarifies that Wonhyo’s view that all humans were equal was formed based on the Doctrine of Ilsim, or One Mind, in the *Mahāyāna-sraddhotpādaśāstra*; and finally, Section 5 interprets his conduct of non-obstruction that did not hesitate to break the precepts from the perspective of edifying all living beings as a religious mission of a bodhisattva who has not left home, or grha-pati. Wonhyo found all human beings equal in the sense of endless death and reincarnation of One Mind but simultaneously recognized the difference between bodhisattva and all living beings and urged the former to edify the latter. He emulated Vimalakīrti and devoted himself to the edification of all living beings, which he called non-obstruction, after returning to secular life. Wonhyo’s view that all humans were equal and his altruistic bodhisattva practices are significant in that he both sought the direction Unified Silla should pursue in a Buddhist equal society. His marriage with Princess Yoseok and the appointment of his son by the royal family, which led the unification of the Three Kingdoms, implies that Wonhyo’s view of humans and conduct to edify all living beings responded to the demand of the times. Thus, the 13th-century Buddhist historian Iryeon attributed the spread of Buddhism in Silla to Wonhyo. At the same time, Wonhyo was devoted to investigating the universal mind of humans like doctrinal-study monks from the perspective of Vijñānavāda and did not focus on the human body or the natural environment. In this sense, he represented the view of humans of doctrinal Buddhism.

**Keywords:** Bodhisattva 菩薩, conduct of no-obstruction 無碍行, *Gisinnon byeolgi* 起信論別記, *Gisinnon sol/Commentary on the Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論疏, grha-pati 居士, Hwajaeng 和諍, Ilsim/One Mind 一心, *Geumgang sammaegyong non* 金剛三昧經論, Wonhyo/Weonhyo 元曉

