CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

WONHYO

A. Charles Muller

INTRODUCTION

Wonhyo 元曉 (617–686) was one of the most influential Buddhist thinkers, writers, and commentators, not only within the Korean Buddhist tradition, but in all of East Asian Buddhist history. With his life spanning the end of the Korean Three Kingdoms period and the beginning of the Unified Silla, Wonhyo played a vital role in the reception and assimilation of the broad range of doctrinal Buddhist streams that flowed into East Asia at the time. While Wonhyo was most interested in, and affected by, Tathāgatagarbha (Womb of Thus Gone Ones; Ch. *rulai zang* 如來藏) and Yogācāra (Ch. Weishi 唯識) systems of thought, in his extensive scholarly works and in commentaries and essays he embraced the entire spectrum of Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings that were received in East Asia, including such traditions as Pure Land (K. Jeongto Jong 淨土宗), *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* studies (K. Yeolban Jong 涅槃宗), *Lotus Sūtra* studies, Flower Ornament (K. Hwaeom 華嚴宗), Middle Way (K. Samnon 三論宗; Skt. Madhyamaka), Logic (K. Inmyeong 因明), Monastic Discipline (Vinaya) studies (K. Yeyul 戒律), and State Protection.

He wrote commentaries on virtually all of the most influential Mahāyāna scriptures, altogether totaling over eighty works in over 200 fascicles. Among his most influential works were the commentaries he wrote on the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (K. *Daeseung gisillon* 大乘起信論), the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (K. *Yeolban gyeong* 涅槃經), and the *Vajrasamādhi Sūtra* (K. *Geumgang sammae gyeong jing* 金剛三昧經). These were treated with utmost respect by leading Buddhist scholars in China and Japan, and his work on the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* helped to establish that text as one of the most influential in East Asia. Wonhyo spent the earlier part of his career as a monk, but later left the priesthood to spread the Buddhadharma as a layman. Recorded as having led a colorful and unfettered lifestyle during this period, Wonhyo ended up becoming somewhat of a folk hero in Korea. He was a colleague and friend of the influential Silla Hwaeom monk Uisang 義湘 (625–702), and it can be said that Wonhyo's scholarly efforts at elucidating Tathāgatagarbha doctrines contributed to Uisang's efforts in establishing Hwaeom as a dominant stream of doctrinal thought on the Korean peninsula.[1]

AQ: is asterisk needed?

WONHYO'S LIFE

Although there is no extant comprehensive biographical source for Wonhyo, scholars have been able to construct a general outline of his life based on fragmentary accounts.[2] Wonhyo was born in the thirty-ninth year of the Jinpyeong reign (617), with the secular family name of Seol 薛, was probably ordained at around the age of fifteen (632),[3] and subsequently studied under a number of accomplished teachers. From the broad scope of topics covered in his writings, it is obvious that he had fairly direct access to developments in the various forms of Buddhist doctrine being studied in China at that time. Wonhyo is said to have studied the *Lotus Sūtra* with the eminent monk Nangji,[4] and in the process of his commentarial work often consulted with the monk Hyegong.[5] He is also recorded as having studied the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* and *Vimalakīrti-sūtra* together with Bodeok and Uisang respectively.[6]

The most often-cited episode from Wonhyo's life found within these hagiographies is that of his attempt to go to study in the Tang in China – the ultimate learning experience for Korean and Japanese monks for a number of centuries. According to one account, Wonhyo was motivated to make this trip primarily for the purpose of gaining access to the new Yogācāra teachings that were being introduced through the translations of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–64).[7] But before even getting out of Silla, Wonhyo apparently lost interest in taking this trip and returned home. According to the hagiographical accounts, what stopped Wonhyo from pursuing this opportunity to go to the Tang was a major awakening experience.

As the story goes, when Wonhyo and Uisang arrived at their port of embarkation, their ship's departure was delayed by inclement weather. Caught in the rain and without a place to stay, they took shelter for the night in a nearby cave, where they found gourds from which to drink, and so were able to get a decent night's sleep. It was only at the first light of dawn that they realized that the cave in which they stayed was actually a tomb, and that the "gourds" from which they had drunk were human skulls. The storm continued, and their departure was delayed for another day, such that they were forced to spend another night in the same cave. During their second night in the cave they were unable to sleep, being plagued by ghosts and nightmares. As Wonhyo reflected on this experience, he suddenly became deeply aware of the extent to which his perception of the world was based on the condition of his own mind. He experienced a great awakening to the principle of Consciousness-only, after which he decided that there was, after all, no need to go to China in search of the Dharma. He characterized his experience thus: "Because of the arising of thought, various phenomena arise; when thought ceases, a cave and a grave are not two" (心生故種種法生, 心滅故龕墳不二).[8]

And so Wonhyo said: "Since there are no dharmas outside of the mind, why should I seek them somewhere? I will not go to the Tang."[9] As the content of his awakening, Wonhyo saw that since there was nothing outside of his own mind, there was nothing special for him to seek in China, and he returned home to Silla. After having an affair with the princess Yoseok, Wonhyo returned to the secular life, taking up the name "Layman of Minor Lineage." He is said to have subsequently devoted all of his energies to the spreading of Buddhism to the common people.

During this period Wonhyo led an unstructured lifestyle. While carrying out extensive commentarial work and delivering lectures, he at the same time frequented bars and brothels, playing the lute here and there, sleeping in mausoleums and in the homes of the common people. At other times he engaged in seated meditation in the mountains or along riversides, according to the inclinations of his own mind. It is also said that the masses came to know

how to gain the invisible aid of the Buddha by chanting his name through Wonhyo's teachings. Wonhyo died suddenly in at the age of 70 in the third lunar month of 686 at Hyeolsa 穴寺. His son Seol Chong brought his remains to Bunhwangsa (the temple with which Wonhyo had been primarily associated during his career), where he made a clay image and interred his ashes.

WONHYO'S WRITINGS

Wonhyo was an extremely prolific writer, recorded as having composed over 200 fascicles in more than eighty works. Among these, twenty-two are extant either in full or fragmentarily.[10]

A glance at the list of Wonhyo's extant writings readily shows the breadth of his interests and doctrinal mastery, as he explicated almost all of the most important texts from the major Mahāyāna traditions being studied in China at the time, with the exception of Esoteric Buddhist treatises. Doctrinal traditions covered in his works include Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā), Three Treatise (Madhyamaka), *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, Tathāgatagarbha, *Lotus Sūtra*, Vinaya, Pure Land, Yogācāra, State Protection, Huayan, and Buddhist Logic. Wonhyo conducted extensive research on all of the major Mahāyāna scriptures and treatises of the time, along with their associated doctrines, with his own work advancing these studies significantly. There is no other major scholar in China, Korea, or Japan prior to the modern era who exhibited such a combination of range and prolific exegetical mastery of the Mahāyāna tradition.

WONHYO'S THOUGHT

Unaffiliated with any particular school or doctrinal tradition, Wonhyo applied himself to the explication of all the major Mahāyāna source texts that were available at the time, and in doing so had a major impact on East Asian Buddhism. He is cited extensively, and his interpretations of the texts from this broad range of traditions are taken seriously in subsequent commentarial works in China, Korea, and Japan. The key terms that have been applied in modern times to characterize his overall approach as seen in his writings are those of "harmonization of disputes" (*hwajaeng* 和諍) and interpenetrated Buddhism (*tong bulgyo* 通佛教).

DOCTRINAL HARMONIZATION (*HWAJAENG*)

As a methodological approach, harmonization of disputes refers to Wonhyo's relentless pursuit of ostensibly variant or conflicting Buddhist doctrinal or hermeneutical positions. He investigates them exhaustively until he can identify the precise point at which their variance occurs, and then shows how differences in fundamental background, motivation, or sectarian bias on the part of the proponent of that particular position led to the production of that scholar's own position, which stands in conflict with those of other scholars. Wonhyo engages in this exercise repeatedly, in every extant commentary, in every essay and treatise – to an extent not seen in the works of any other East Asian exegete. In this manner, his approach differs considerably from most of the major contemporary scriptural commentators in China, in that in his works we do not see the application of the practice of doctrinal classification (K. *pangyo*; Ch. *panjiao* 判教).

One of the most concentrated and sustained examples of Wonhyo's ecumenical approach can be seen in his *Ten Approaches to the Reconciliation of Doctrinal Disputes* (*Simmun hwajaeng non* 十門和諍論),[11] for which we unfortunately only have fragments from the beginning portion. This is one of Wonhyo's very few works that is not a commentary, and it is not composed for the purpose of resolving a singular doctrinal theme. It is rather a methodological exercise that selectively utilizes Mādhyamika, Dignāgan, and essence-function logic, interwoven with the motifs of the major Mahāyāna scriptures, including the *Lotus Sūtra*, *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, and so on. As in his other writings, Wonhyo's aim is to work through ostensibly conflicting doctrinal problems using rigorous logic to clarify their content, reveal their underpinnings, and ultimately demonstrate their commensurability with the Mahāyāna Buddhist system as a whole. At the same time, while fully investigating all the disputes and pending issues that appeared between schools and their scriptures and treatises – as well as differences in current trends of thought – Wonhyo used the discussion of these variant positions to establish his own position.[11] Wonhyo's overriding concern with the harmonization of disputes is seen not only in this text, but pervades every nook and cranny of his extant writings.

The debates, controversies, and minor differences in interpretation that Wonhyo took up for treatment in his commentaries vary widely from text to text. On one level, when Wonhyo wrote an exegesis on a text, he usually attempted to resolve disagreements in interpretation seen in prior commentaries, often among members of that text's own commentarial tradition. In this type of situation, Wonhyo will often be coming to the argument as a relative outsider and will make his judgments based on the agreement or not of the arguments with general Mahāyāna principles, principles of logical argumentation, and/or scriptural authority. His commentaries on a given text might also take up the positions of that work *vis-à-vis* other competing or slightly differing doctrinal streams of the time. Wonhyo also had a penchant for testing the distinctive doctrines of a given scriptural tradition in relation to general Mahāyāna principles of doctrine and argumentation. For example, in his commentaries on Pure Land scriptures, he wonders how the notion of achieving rebirth in the Pure Land based on a mere ten repetitions of Amitābha's name can be reconciled with the path of attainment of buddhahood requiring three incalculable eons in the Yogācāra system – or how the *Lotus Sūtra*'s understanding of the relationship of the one and three vehicles matches up with that of the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra* (Discourse Explaining the Thought) and other scriptures. For Wonhyo, Yogācāra quite often ends up being the test bed against which idiosyncratic doctrines are treated – no doubt because it is within Yogācāra where the doctrinal mechanisms of theory and practice are worked out in the greatest logical and systematic detail.

YOGĀCĀRA AND BUDDHA NATURE (TATHĀGATAGARBHA)

Although, as indicated above, Wonhyo was given to investigate a vast range of discrepancies in doctrinal positions both large and small, there was one overarching controversy in East Asia that had reached its peak at his time and that came to the forefront of his own work, no doubt exerting an influence on the choice of the texts he explicated and the content of such exegeses. This was the tension between the two differing, yet much-overlapping, doctrinal streams of Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha that dominated the Buddhological

discourse of East Asia for several centuries. As is well documented, the Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-nature) tradition had taken strong hold in various forms in East Asia during the fifth and sixth centuries, to the extent that it had even influenced the interpretations of Yogācāra doctrine that came to be promoted in East Asia during this period. The new translations of Yogācāra texts produced by Xuanzang and his colleagues brought with them a powerful challenge to the understanding of the Tathāgatagarbha stream, positing a mental condition of karmic moral neutrality in the deepest layer of mind, articulated in detailed arguments contained in the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*, the *Saṃdhinirmocana-sutra*, *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 (Treatise on Consciousness Only), and other influential works. Wonhyo was just coming into his own as a scholar when these new translations began to make their way to the Korean peninsula. Reflecting his generally open-minded and nonsectarian attitude, while he had no doubt already had been firmly grounded in the Tathāgatagarbha approach, he read the new Yogācāra texts in earnest. He studied and wrote commentaries on all of them, and he used them (especially the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*) as background references for his commentaries on a broad range of traditions, ranging far beyond Yogācāra proper. Thus, while in the final analysis Wonhyo's personal religious convictions never departed from the Buddha-nature-based faith in which they were rooted, Wonhyo deeply embraced the incoming new corpus of Yogācāra materials, understanding the way in which they filled a vast lacuna in explaining the functions of the mind. In his simultaneous acceptance of both strands of thought to this degree, Wonhyo is unique among scholarly exegetes of his stature, as all the other major figures of his era – represented by Fazang 法藏 (643–712) and Kuiji 窺基 (632–82) on both sides of the spectrum – tended to place strong precedence on one system or the other, to the point that their writings usually deliberately refuted, or at least devalorized, the other, often through relegation in status in a doctrinal classification scheme.

While Wonhyo clearly perceived the differences between the two systems (in fact, he articulated the differences more clearly and extensively than any other scholar, as we will see below), his unusual ability to see any given argument issue through the eyes of its proponent led him to see the two in a complementary and overlapping fashion, rather than as entirely incommensurate. A major point of departure for the development of this perspective is the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* (hereafter *AMF*) – a text that was clearly one of his favorites, and upon which he wrote some of the most influential of his commentaries. The *AMF* was a work that had attempted to forge an amalgamated discourse derived from both traditions by working key concepts from both into a single system. In the course of his commentarial work on the *AMF* Wonhyo uncovered a critical and telling touchstone for defining the relationship between Tathāgatagarbha and Yogācāra in the notion of the "two hindrances" – the afflictive and cognitive hindrances (Skt. *kleśāvaraṇa*, *jñeyāvaraṇa*). Investigating the notions of affliction and nescience – along with their removal – at length throughout the entire Mahāyāna scriptural tradition, Wonhyo composed a treatise in which he analyzed, systematized, and compared these vitally important Buddhist notions from the perspectives of the Yogācāra and Tathāgatagarbha traditions. This work, one of his most important philosophical investigations, was entitled the *System of the Two Hindrances* (K. *Ijangui* 二障義; trans. Muller and Nguyen 2012). Through this work Wonhyo treated the relationship between these two predominating strands in religious thought with a depth and balance unequalled before or since his time.

WONHYO'S WRITINGS: LOGIC AND MODES OF INQUIRY

Aside from his level of mastery of the Mahāyāna system and his remarkable ability to see an issue from a variety of perspectives, there is no doubt that some part of Wonhyo's success as a Buddhist scholar can be attributed to his writing skills. His classical Chinese writing ability is simply superb – on a par with any of the great Chinese scholars of the period. His writing in classical Chinese is not only good technically and grammatically, but also has a literary flourish, tempo, and playfulness to a degree that was probably never equaled in Korea. The differences become readily apparent when one begins to read the works of his Silla contemporaries: after Wonhyo, the level drops off, and in some cases significantly. The accuracy of his textual citations is also noticeable – something that we can readily verify in the age of digitized canons. Once one has worked with a broad enough cross-section of East Asian Buddhist scholars of the period, one becomes used to finding that it is not unusual for exegetes to have the name of the original text wrong half the time; or to cite a passage that we cannot find in the indicated text; or that it is there, but the paraphrase is so far off that it is difficult to find the source. With Wonhyo, the cited text name is almost always right, and the passage cited is usually exactly the same or quite close, except for cases when he is deliberately abbreviating the citation. In short, in terms of technical scholarly discipline, Wonhyo was top-shelf.

Wonhyo's writing exhibits a few readily distinguishable modes of prose and poetic style. These are sometimes applied with a particular philosophical influence or a distinctive type of hermeneutic or discursive approach, of which several intertwining types can be identified. One of the first forms that can be discerned in his writings is a lyrical mode that emulates Daoist style, most notably as seen in the *Daode jing* (道德經). This mode, especially prevalent in the prolegomena of his works, serves mainly to vividly express and praise the attributes of the Dharma, the Great Vehicle, awakening, and so forth. Such language is powerful in its ability to describe something wondrous and inconceivable, but is rarely applied in the articulation of any specific doctrinal position. The verses that constitute the prolegomena to Wonhyo's commentaries are invariably accompanied by or blended with an exercise in inconceivability, using examples of space, time, and so on, as can be seen, for example, in the prolegomenon to his commentary on the *Flower Ornament Sutra* (*Avataṃsaka Sūtra*; Ch. *Huayan jing* 華嚴經).

> Now, in the unhindered and unobstructed Dharma-opening of the Dharma-realm there is no Dharma, and yet no non-Dharma; no opening, and yet no non-opening. Thus it is neither large nor small, neither in a hurry nor taking its time; neither moving nor still, neither one nor many. Not large, it can become an atom, leaving nothing behind. Not small, it can contain all of space, with room left over. Unhurried, it can include all the ages (*kalpa*) in the three time periods; not taking its time, it can enter fully into an instant. Neither moving nor still, cyclic existence (*saṃsāra*) is *nirvāṇa* and *nirvāṇa* is cyclic existence. Neither one nor many, one dharma is all dharmas and all dharmas are one dharma.
>
> (HBJ 1.495a6–10)

This passage is also useful for introducing Wonhyo's oft-used rhetorical strategy of "opening and combining" (*gae-hap*) – a literary practice that is reminiscent of the Chan literary trope of "rolling out and taking back up." This method, which works toward the

disallowing of attachment to a given position, is identified by many scholars as being central to Wonhyo's project. Bak Jonghong characterizes it as:

> 'Open' (開; *gae*) opens up to the reader the vast numbers of different ideas presented in a text, while 'combine' (合; *hap*) provides a synthetic perspective that can reveal how those various ideas complement one another. When both the hermeneutics of opening and combining hermeneutics are applied simultaneously in the explication of a text, one is free to advocate certain positions and to critique others. One can open up for analysis different viewpoints without creating unnecessary complications, as well as combine those viewpoints into a single overriding perspective without creating untoward parochialism. Put another way, treating a text either analytically or synthetically neither adds anything to it nor takes anything away. Hence, one may advocate something without gaining anything, or critique something else without losing anything.
>
> (Bak 1991: 49–50; slightly modified from Robert Buswell's original translation)

Another prominent form of discourse utilized by Wonhyo is a paradoxical logic reflecting the flavor of the Perfection of Wisdom texts, which goes something like: "Since there is nothing that is shown, there is nothing that is not shown. Since there is nothing to attain, there is nothing that is not attained" (*Doctrinal Essentials of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*; HBJ 1.480a16–17; T 1697.33.68c4–5). In this case, rather than taking a point to the limit of its logical extension, as in the Daoistic mode discussed above, Wonhyo makes a series of paradoxical statements that reflect an understanding of the logic of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). This mode often ends up being indistinguishable from another favorite approach, the apophatic "negation of negation" as seen in Mādhyamika logic and used throughout Wonhyo's writings. At the same time it should be noted that this is, like his other rhetorical strategies, not something to which he adheres exclusively. Mixed in with these borrowings from classical Chinese and Indian Buddhist modes of discourse are East Asian approaches, such as a reliance on the paradigm of essence-function (*ti-yong* 體用). Wonhyo moves seamlessly among these modes, combining them to execute the detailed arguments that ultimately assert the integrity of the Mahāyāna system.

TWO TRUTHS

Closely associated with Perfection of Wisdom-type thinking is the ubiquitous presence of the two truths (conventional and ultimate) as a hermeneutical device throughout Wonhyo's work. We can find the two truths applied virtually everywhere in his writing. For example, it is often stated that one scholar's position can be seen as holding true from an absolute (K. *jin* 眞) perspective, while the other can be seen as holding true from a conventional (K. *sok* 俗) perspective. Equally visible in this respect are the various analogs of the two truths, such as emptiness and existence, the conditioned and the unconditioned, etc.

In acknowledging the extent of his application of the two truths, one could say that Wonhyo is following a general Buddhist approach that is explicitly articulated in Madhyamaka, being subsequently applied by numerous influential thinkers from various schools. What is distinctive about Wonhyo is the extent of his unceasing emphasis on the mutual containment of the two truths – their not being two yet not being one. Furthermore, the two truths simultaneously play the role of hermeneutic tool with which one deals with the text as object, while at the same time serving as a type of personal (meditative) exercise

for undoing the habituated tendencies of one's own consciousness – the tendency to instantaneously and unconsciously move in the conceptual directions of reification or annihilation. For Wonhyo, the act of scriptural exegesis and one's engagement in one's own personal efforts toward breaking the habituation of constructing and maintaining dualisms are not two separate things. Thus, he seems to believe that these categories, applied flexibly, and pushed to their limits, can go just about the whole way in explaining the contradictions to be seen in Buddhist discourse, without needing to take the step of placing texts, theories, and doctrines into pigeonholes, *à la* doctrinal classification (*panjiao*).

Thus, lurking in the background of this entire discussion is the basic Buddhist problem of attachment (*grāha*; K. *jip* 執) – to any kind of rigid position, whether it be the conventional or the real, existence or emptiness, etc. Attachment, typically carried out in adherence to the extremes of reification and nihilism, is the key object of criticism in Wonhyo's Vinaya commentaries, where he argues repeatedly that the most important point is not to reify the precepts, but to be able to flexibly judge morality according to the proper context. Related in application are several other binaries that are regularly employed hermeneutic categories for Wonhyo, equally serving to maintain fluidity of interpretive perspective: these are the categories of specific (K. *byeol* 別) and general (K. *chong* 総 or *tong* 通), as well as fine (K. *se* 細) and coarse (K. *chu* 麁). Quite often a given theory is seen as being acceptable in a general sense, but not in specific situations, and vice versa.

One of the best examples of Wonhyo's usage of the two truths in an exercise of nonattachment to extremes is found in his preface to the **Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*:

AQ: asterisk needed?

> Now, the fount of the One Mind is free from existence and non-existence and is entirely pure. The ocean of the three [levels of apprehension of] emptiness[13] merges the absolute and conventional and is perfectly calm. While calmly fusing two, it is not one. Entirely pure, it is free from extremes, but does not lie in the center. Not lying in the center, yet free from extremes, non-existent dharmas do not abide in non-existence, and marks that are not non-existent do not abide in existence.
>
> Since it is not one yet merges dualities, non-absolute phenomena are not originally conventional, and the non-conventional principle is not originally absolute. Since it merges dualities and yet is not one, there is nothing that the natures of the absolute and conventional do not establish, and there are no marks of purity and pollution not contained within. Since it is free from extremes, yet not in the center, there are no existent or non-existent dharmas that are not created, and no positive or negative implications that are not subsumed.
>
> Accordingly, without refutation, there is nothing not refuted; without positing, there is nothing not posited. We can call it the ultimate principle of no-principle, the great being-so of not being-so. This is the general message of this *sūtra*.
>
> (HBJ 1.604b7–20)

The principle of the two truths is probably the most fundamental and extensively used hermeneutic structure throughout Wonhyo's works, applied in a way that emphasizes the importance of the maintenance of an attitude that allows for fluid shifting back and forth between the truths, as well as their analogs, such as conditioned/unconditioned, existence/emptiness, and the One Mind that always includes both aspects without being two and without being one.

But lest we oversimplify: the matter of technique and approach in the application of this basic principle is not related simply to a skillful application of the paradigm of the two truths alone. There are, in Wonhyo, many things involved in being able to reconcile doctrinal disagreements, not the least of which is a basic level of mastery of the doctrines that allows him to fully apprehend what the proponents of various positions are trying to say. Wonhyo possessed an unusual grasp of the major scriptures and treatises from all of the Mahāyāna traditions represented in East Asia and was able to readily bring to mind and cite a passage from anywhere within the Mahāyāna canon to support or refute a certain position.

LOGIC

Finally, Wonhyo is distinguished by being one of the earliest Buddhist scholars in East Asia to attempt to grapple with Buddhist logic and seriously apply its principles. Logic (Skt. *hetuvidyā*) was a new and interesting tool that had been introduced by Xuanzang as part of his translation project, and Wonhyo was quick to see its usefulness as a standard for evaluating the relative strengths and weaknesses of competing arguments. Not only did he extensively apply logic categories and terminology in his exegetical works and treatises – he also wrote his own commentaries on some of the newly translated works on logic.[13]

NONCONCEPTUAL FAITH AS THE FINAL DESTINATION

Our present brief introduction to the life and works of Wonhyo would be incomplete if it did not fully clarify the fact that Wonhyo's discourse, along with its strong roots in precise philosophical argumentation through the principles in logic – grounded in an unusually broad and deep mastery of the canon – also has a distinctly religio-mystical dimension. While the defense of a specific doctrinal tradition or tenet is obviously not the most important thing for Wonhyo, it is further the case that in the end he is not merely a philosopher, dialectician, exegete, or master of the doctrine. His ultimate purpose in resolving doctrinal disputes is a religious one – aimed eventually at the arrival at the state of deep faith as described most completely in the *AMF*.

That deepest form of faith is a state of mind that linguistic argumentation cannot lay hold of, a state where words cannot gain any traction. Yet, in line with the fluidity of the One Mind expressed continuously throughout his writings, that state of faith in which the attachment to language is broken off can be utilized as a position that allows the exegete to see beyond the differences in the positions of the various participants in doctrinal argumentation, to see their underpinnings. Thus, the ability to be in a state wherein one is disconnected from words, while being its own end, can also serve as an exegetical standpoint from which reconciliation of disputes is more readily possible.

And while we can, from the perspective of logical argumentation, assert that the overriding aim of all the modes of Wonhyo's discourse described above is that of "reconciliation of disputes," this is still only the penultimate goal of Wonhyo's efforts. His final purpose, even as a scholarly commentator, is *religious*, rather than philosophical or doctrinal. Thus, his intent in validating the *sūtra*s of various traditions through his exegesis is to allow each one of them to serve as the best possible guide to Buddhist salvation. He often laments, in the closing portions of his works, or in the closing sections of arguments, the futility of approaching the truth through language, and thus admonishes himself and his

readers to recognize that the only real recourse is to gain a firm footing in the domain of the non-conceptual. As can be seen in his *Doctrinal Essentials of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* (*Muryangsu gyeong jong-yo*), this nonconceptual experience is none other than the experience of absolute faith itself.

> The incomparable, unequaled, supreme cognitive faculty[14] is established in order to overcome both these barriers – the doubt [about the possibility of omniscience] and the problem [of whether its attainment is sudden or gradual]. Therefore I want to clarify that this mirror-like cognitive faculty surpasses the other three kinds of cognitive faculties – there is nothing like it. Outside the two truths one resides independently, in non-duality. Both barriers and their two external expressions transcend the barrierless. One should just have faith, because it cannot be apprehended through reason. Therefore it is called the incomparable, unequalled, supreme cognitive faculty.
>
> (HBJ 1.562a6–10)

Or,

> [S]ince there is nothing to be seen, there is nothing that [the incomparable, unequaled, supreme cognition] doesn't see. In this way it corrects the fourth doubt. If you are unable to grasp the point, it is like words grasping meanings – limited and limitless – none escape error. It is indeed precisely based on the approach that denies a limit that one provisionally posits limitlessness. If one is unable to resolve these four doubts, even if one manages to be born in that [pure] land, one resides only at its outer edges. If there is someone like this, even if he is unable to understand the world of the prior four cognitive faculties, but is able to humbly yield even though his mind's eye is not yet opened, and with faith, think only of the Buddha (Tathāgata) with wholehearted submission, this kind of person, according to his level of practice, will be born in that land, and not reside at its outer edges.
>
> (HBJ 1.562a24–562b8)

This same point is made frequently in various forms in Wonhyo's commentaries on the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* and **Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*. In the closing passage of the *System of the Two Hindrances*, Wonhyo says:

AQ: asterisk needed?

> Yet these sentient beings, as well as all dharmas, are not really persons or dharmas in the commonly understood sense of the word, nor are they nonexistent. I am offering this explanation, yet the truth of the two hindrances can be fathomed only by the enlightened ones. [We sentient beings] should consider it relying on pious faith.
>
> (HBJ 1.814b18–20)

Finally, as Wonhyo says in his oft-cited preface to his *Commentary on the Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*:

> Who, besides Vimalakīrti or the One-glance Gentleman,[15] can discuss the Great Vehicle without language, and produce profound faith in the state of severance of thought?
>
> (HBJ 1.698b13–14)

ABBREVIATIONS

HBJ = *Hanguk bulgyo jeonseo*. 韓國佛教全書 [The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism] (1984). Seoul: Dongguk University Press.
T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. [Japanese Edition of the Buddhist Canon] (1924–35). Tokyo: Daizō kyōkai. (Electronic Texts from SAT and CBETA used as sources).
XZJ = *Xuzangjing*. 續藏經. Taiwanese Reprint of *Zokuzōkyō*. [*Dai nihon zokuzōkyō*] (1905–12). Kyoto: Zokyō shoin. (Electronic Text from CBETA used as source).

NOTES

1 However, the labeling of Wonhyo as a Huayan "patriarch" that can be seen in classical biographical works – a characterization regularly repeated in modern Korean Buddhist scholarship – is actually difficult to support, given that Wonhyo himself was never affiliated with any specific school, as well as the fact that only a very small portion of his extant writings demonstrates any special Huayan leanings or influence.

2 The most complete among these fragmentary accounts is that found on the *Goseonsa Seodang Hwasang tapbi* (Stūpa of the Reverend Seodang [Wonhyo] from Goseon Temple 高仙寺誓幢和尚塔碑), a stone monument on which was written a short biographical sketch of Wonhyo. The upper and lower parts, which had been broken off from each other, were discovered separately in different locations. Other significant partial accounts of his life include: (1) *Wonhyo bulgi* (Wonhyo the Unbridled 元曉不羈), contained in the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (HBJ 6.347b17–348b19). (2) The *Silla guk Hwangyongsa Wonhyo jeon* (*Biography of Wonhyo of Hwangyongsa in the Tang Dominion of Silla* 唐新羅國黃龍寺元曉傳). (3) The *Dang Silla guk Uisang jeon* (*Biography of Uisang from the Tang Dominion of Silla* 唐新羅國義湘傳) in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Song Biographies of Eminent Monks; T 2106.50.730a6–b29). (4) The *Wonhyo guksa jeon* (*Biography of National Preceptor Wonhyo* 元曉國師傳) in the *Dongsa yeoljeon* (*Biographies of Eastern Masters* 東師列傳; HBJ 10.996b13–c16). Fragmentary accounts of Wonhyo's life can be also found in the *Zongjing lu* (*Record of the Axiom Mirror* 宗鏡錄; T 2016.48.477a22–28). *Linjian lu* (*Record of the Forest* 林間錄; XZJ 148.590a2–9) in the *Uisang jeongyo* (*Uisang's Life and Teachings* 義湘傳教; HBJ 6.348b20–349c22) and the *Sabok bureon* (Snake Boy Doesn't Talk 蛇福不言) from the *Samguk yusa* (HBJ 6.349b23–350a19). Biographical data for the study of the life of Wonhyo was compiled by Gim Yeongtae 金煐泰 in his *Wonhyo yeon-gu saryo chongnok* (Wonhyo hak yeonguwon, Janggyeonggak, 1996). In this book Prof. Gim assembled all the material related in whole or part to material on the life of Wonhyo, arranged in detailed tables.

3 There is only one extant concrete account of Wonhyo's year of entry into the Buddhist order, which is found in the biography of Wonhyo contained in the *Song Version of the Biographies of Eminent Monks* (宋高僧傳). There it says he entered into the saṃgha in the "year of *guancai*," which means something like "putting up the hair" or "braiding the hair" i.e., a kind of coming of age ritual, usually around 16 (or 15 Western age). (T 2106.50.730a7–8.)

4 *Samguk yusa Nangji Seung-un Bohyeon su* 朗智乘雲普賢樹.

5 *Samguk yusa Yihye dongjin* 二惠同塵.

6 *Samguk yusa*, *Bojangbongno Bodeok iam* 寶藏奉老普德移庵.

7 The reference to Wonhyo's specific interest in studying Yogācāra is found in the biographical sketch contained in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* at T 2061.50.730a11–12. "He went with Uisang to [study in] the Tang, as he yearned for the teachings of the Tripiṭakas Xuanzang and Kuiji."

8 This story is found in Uisang's biography, starting on T 2061.50.729a3. This line is a paraphrase of the verse in the *Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*, which says that when a thought arises, all dharmas arise, and when a thought ceases, all dharmas disappear. T 1666.32.577b22.

9 「心外無法胡用別求 我不入唐」 *Song gaoseng zhuan* Biography of Uisang, T 2061.50.729a3.

10 The number twenty-two is based on the number of titles listed in the first volume of the HBJ. If we take into consideration that the *Combined Version of the Commentaries on the Awakening of Faith* contained therein is actually constituted by two works, then we can count twenty-three extant works. For the full list of these extant works, see the entry on Wonhyo in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb).

11 HBJ 1.838a–840c. A translation of this text by Cuong T. Nguyen is available in *Wonhyo's Philosophy of Mind*. A translation by Charles Muller is available on his web site at http://www.acmuller.net/kor-bud/simmun_hwajaeng_non.html.

12 Since the *Simmun hwajaeng non* only exists in fragments, we do not know the full list of ten topics that he treated, but the table of contents has been reconstructed based on various citations in other works. The suggested items for the table of contents (with items 4–10 being hypothetical) are: (1) the various arguments about three vehicles and One Vehicle; (2) various attachments to existence and emptiness; (3) various attachments to self and phenomena; (4) various doctrines of the three natures; (4) various doctrines of the five natures; (5) becoming Buddha; (6) various doctrines of the two hindrances; (7) various doctrines on *nirvāṇa*; (8) various doctrines of Buddha bodies; (9) various doctrines of Buddha nature; (10) various attachments to the real and the mundane.

13 As described in the **Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*: emptiness of marks, emptiness of emptiness, emptiness of that which is empty. See T 273.9.369b5. AQ: asterisk needed?

14 Unfortunately, only fragments of one of his works on logic are extant, but a sufficient portion of this text remains for a reader to get a sense of how Wonhyo understood Buddhist logic. This is the *Pan biryang non*, translated with an authoritative introduction by Dan Lusthaus in *Wonhyo's Philosophy of Mind*.

15 Identified in this text by Wonhyo as the equivalent of the Yogācāra "mirror-cognition."

16 A reference to Confucius and Wenbo Xuezi, who, according to the *Zhuangzi*, did not say anything to each other when they met, even though Confucius had wanted to meet Wenbo for a long time. When Confucius was asked the reason by his disciple Zilu, he replied: "With that kind of man, once glance tells you that the Way is there before you. What room does that leave for the possibility of speech?" This discussion occurs in Chapter 21 *Tian Zi-fang*. See Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu* (NY: Columbia University Press), p. 223.

REFERENCES

Muller, A. Charles and Cuong T. Nguyen (ed.). 2012. *Wonhyo's Philosophy of Mind.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Pak, Chonghon. 1991. "Wŏnhyo's Philosophical Thought." Lewis R. Lancaster and C. S. Yu (eds.). *Assimilation of Buddhism in Korea: Religious Maturity and Innovation in the Silla Dynasty.* Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (trans.). Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press: 47–103.