

Wonhyo: Coming to the West —Yet No One Recognizes Him

Sung-bae Park

Wonhyo can be viewed from two perspectives: 1—the visible appearance, or momjit, of his words and 2—the deeper essence, or mom, which reflects his message. These words, mom and momjit, reflect an ancient East Asian paradigm which refers to the nonduality of the body or essence (mom) and its functions or operations (momjit). These terms have often been translated in the West as “essence” and “function.” It is vital that the reader interpret Wonhyo’s writing from this deeper perspective. In order to do so, the reader himself must change, from being a person of momjit to one of mom.

This paper examines the first paragraph of the first chapter of Wonhyo’s noted Commentary on the Vajrasamādhi Sūtra. The chapter itself is entitled “A Statement of Its Main Idea.” Here Wonhyo discusses the “one mind” by means of a series of negations and affirmations. I have argued that his affirmations are essentially negations of his previous negations, making the point that he is basically negating himself. This is a crucial requirement for any religious practitioner. Everything must be negated, including the practitioner.

Wonhyo concludes this paragraph by saying “... though negating nothing, there is nothing not negated” I have examined this phrase, arguing that it reflects a nature-oriented, Taoist perspective, rather than a Buddhist view which should represent the position of the practitioner. I would prefer to re-translate

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the phrase by stating “... negation is negated ...” In my view, this more accurately reflects the Buddhist position, in which there is no possibility of affirmation whatsoever. Thus even negation itself is negated.

Key words: Buddhist Theory of Negation, Korean Buddhism,
Korean Taoism, Mom / Momjit, One Mind, Wonhyo.

We can truthfully say that Wonhyo (617-686) has now arrived in the West. Even within my own narrow field of experience, I have witnessed this truth and assisted in its manifestation. I founded the International Association for Wonhyo Studies both at Stony Brook University here in the United States and at Dongguk University in Korea over ten years ago. I have translated Wonhyo’s noted *Commentaries on the Awakening of Mahayana Faith* (Wonhyo 1979a: HPC.1.733-789), using them not only as texts for my students at various times but also at the International Wonhyo Conference on two separate occasions. This is evidence just within my own life of Wonhyo’s arrival on Western soil and in Western minds.

However, I feel that it is equally true that people have yet to recognize this great seventh-century Korean Buddhist thinker. How am I able to make this statement? It is surely understandable that Westerners would have difficulty in comprehending him. But what is the basis for my statement?

To make an analogy, let us look at the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament of the Christian Bible—specifically, at chapter 24, verses 12-32 (*The NIV Study Bible*: 1586).

These verses relate a story which may be entitled “Jesus on the Way to Emmaus.” In this story, two men who had witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion in Jerusalem were walking back to their hometown of Emmaus and discussing various matters which related to it. They had heard about the visit of Jesus’ mother Mary and Mary Magdalene to the tomb and their shock at not finding his body there. The two men were questioning each other: Did this really mean that Jesus had been resurrected? Suddenly someone appeared out of

Death, Rebirth and Personal Identity in Buddhism

Karel Werner

This paper analyses three concepts crucial to the Buddhist doctrine: (1) Death which all living beings have to go through and which figures in the canonical texts in a personified form as Māra, the ruler of saṃsāra, and death as the dissolution of the constituents of personality which even Māra must undergo. However, the actuality of death, even within saṃsāra, is virtually denied by the doctrine of rebirth and by the passing into the deathless state of nibbāna on liberation. (2) Rebirth is described as a continual process governed by the circular chain of dependent origination which guarantees individual continuation through life from childhood to old age and through the sequence of rebirths. It can be broken only by a free decision and subsequent effort to accomplish liberation. (3) Identity of the individual is preserved by this continuity despite the absence of any unchanging core of the personality, which is unfathomable and continues even into the state of liberation. This was the teaching of the Pudgalavāda school which spelled out the implications of the Pāli discourse known as the 'Burden bearer' and which was supplemented in Mahāyāna by the teaching according to which five saṃsāric khandhas are transformed into the fivefold transcendental wisdom of the accomplished ones.

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Key words: Burden-bearer, Gandhabba, Māra,
Paṭīcasamuppāda, Puḍgalavāda, Purisapuggala.

I. Death

The concept of ‘death’ occurs in two contexts in early Buddhist sources. First, it appears under the term *māra* in a general meaning and as such designates the whole of the saṃsāric world and also the mode of existence which involves death (cf. several *Mārasuttas* of *Saṃyutta Nikāya*). In these texts death is represented in a personified form and the term then becomes the name of a spirit being (*yakkha*), Māra, who is regarded as the Lord of the realm of death, i.e. of the saṃsāric world. Second, the concept of death, usually expressed by the word *maraṇa*, refers to the lot of all beings in the saṃsāric world, namely the event of their physical death which is followed by their rebirth in a new life within *saṃsāra* on whatever level, or by *nirvāṇa*, as the case might be.

1. Māra

There is obviously an ambiguity in the Pāli scriptures about the term *māra*, sometimes designating the mortal mode of existence and at other times referring to a spirit being so that the word is written in modern editions of the texts and their translations with a capital M. Since Pāli manuscripts do not use capital letters, a decision has to be made according to context. As a spirit being, Māra is regarded as the ruler of the whole realm of manifested reality or the cosmos (*saṃsāra*) with all its levels of existence by virtue of the fact that every living being within the manifested cosmos has to die and so is Māra’s ‘subject,’ as it were. Even the whole cosmos undergoes periodic dissolution under Māra’s power; on this account he has the epithet *antaka* (‘end-maker,’ destroyer), sometimes used as another name for him. As the ruler of all living beings he bears, in some commentaries, the name Vassavattī

Acceptance of *Prajñā* Thought in Chinese Buddhism

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At the time Buddhism was introduced to China, Confucianism (儒教) and Taoism (道教) were already very influential in Chinese social and cultural life. But Buddhist thought presented a new and difficult challenge in understanding for the Chinese scholars because of the essential differences in language construction between the Chinese and Indian Sanskrit languages, and so they sought a familiar 'filter' as an aid to understanding the Buddhist sutras.

In this regard, early on Neo-Taoism (老莊思想) played a significant role in aiding interpretation of the Indian Buddhist texts, as it was through the Neo-Taoist viewpoint that the Chinese were initially able to begin to understand Indian Buddhism, although the Neo-Taoist view was not sufficient to support accurate interpretation of the sūtras. Terms such as Nothingness (無), wrongly interpreted by the Chinese as a synonym for Śūnyatā (空), were borrowed from Neo-Taoist thought in order to understand the Buddhist Prajñā (般若) thought. However, when later it became clear that there were serious defects in these early translations, especially in regard to the concept of Śūnyatā, the understanding of

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which was largely based on Neo-Taoist thought, these Neo-Taoist terms were removed and replaced with more accurate translations.

Among Chinese Buddhist scholars at that time, the monk, Sengzhao (僧肇) was regarded as most skillful in both understanding and interpreting Śūnyatā thought, so that through his gifted translations Chinese Buddhists were finally able to understand the Buddhist sūtras.

Key words: Neo-Taoism, Nothingness, Prajñā Thought, Śūnyatā, Sengzhao.

I. Introduction

For hundreds of years, from the Later Han dynasty (後漢) to the Eastern Chin dynasty (東晉), Confucianism was in a period of decline and the intellectuals were seeking a way of spiritual life through Taoism. At this time, Taoism integrated with Confucianism into a new thought known as *Xuanxue* (玄學) which was flourishing. At the same time Buddhism was flourishing also and becoming established in Chinese society along with other new currents in Chinese thought. However, it was *Prajñā* thought which was the leading light during this period.

In order to understand Chinese Buddhist thought it is necessary to investigate it in association with other forms and characteristics of traditional Chinese thought. The means we will use to do this will be to examine the process of acceptance of early *Prajñā* thought in China.

Our investigation will concentrate firstly, on translation of Buddhist terms, giving consideration to cultural differences between the original Buddhist texts and the early Chinese translations; secondly, we will consider the reasons why the Neo-Taoism was flourishing as the social milieu at the time but was also concerned with facilitating the spread of Buddhism. And finally, we will focus on the reasons why the Neo-Taoist term, “Nothingness” was used to interpret ‘Śūnyatā’ in Prajñā thought. The vehicle for our investigation is a comparative study of Śūnyatā and “Nothingness.”

Korean Patriot and Tea Master: Hyodang Choi Beom-sul(1904-1979)

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This paper surveys the life of Hyodang Choi Beom-sul. When he was only 15, he was actively involved in the 1919 Independence Movement. Going to Japan to study, he met the most famous anarchists of the time, the Korean Park Yeol and his companion, Kaneko Fumiko. They drew him into a plot to assassinate the Japanese crown prince, but the great earthquake of 1923 put an end to that. From 1928, he was the head monk of Dasolsa temple in the hills behind Jinju. He turned it into a focal point of resistance to the Japanese occupation, then to the dictatorial regimes that followed Liberation. There, too, he began to develop his own practice of tea, planting more and more tea bushes, drying his tea each spring, and drinking it with those who visited him. He was a great Buddhist scholar, he established several schools and in his later years, especially, he was acquainted with many leading intellectuals and writers, to whom he communicated his love of tea, his own vision of a specifically Korean Way of Tea. It is suggested that certain aspects of the teaching of Wonhyo provided the fundamental inspiration for his entire life.

Key words: Hyodang Choi Beom-sul, Buddhism, Tea, Wonhyo,
Independence Movement.

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Suffering and Liberation in Theravāda Buddhism

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This paper identifies two themes-suffering and liberation from suffering - as the two key concerns of the teaching of the Buddha. The teaching of the Four Noble Truths contains the Buddha's understanding of human predicament and the solution he discovered for it.

The ultimate liberation from suffering is described in the teaching of the Buddha by such terms as 'diseaseless-ness,' 'decayless-ness,' and 'deathless-ness' which are popularly misunderstood as referring to some kind of eternal existence with all the imaginable blessings lasting indefinitely. The paper shows that the final goal can be characterized by such terms as 'deathless-ness' or immortality only in the sense that one who has realized it has conquered his death, and death no longer is to him what it is to ordinary people who are not enlightened. Subsequently the paper focuses on two crucial concepts that denote the final liberation in the early discourses of the Buddha, namely, purification and liberation. These terms signify the purification of mind of defiling factors and liberation of it from binding factors or psychological shackles or fetters. These also highlight what really happens to the liberated person at the liberation, affirming thereby that liberation is not a form of eternal life bestowed on one through the grace of an omnipotent deity; but it is a state of mind and resultant

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state of happiness arising from its purification and liberation. Finally the paper lays emphasis on the fact that by describing human existence as characterized by suffering the teaching of the Buddha does not subscribe to some form of pessimism of life, and shows how the Buddha, as well as the disciples who realized the cessation of suffering were happy in experiencing the blissfulness of nirvana.

Key words: Teaching of the Buddha, Suffering, Purification,
Liberation, Death, Thirst, Pessimism, Nirvana.

I. Introduction

“Anuradha, in the past and even now I teach only suffering and its cessation” (*Samyutta-nikaya* IV: 384; *Majjhima-nikaya* I: 140)—these words of the Buddha to one of his disciples may be taken as summarizing his entire teaching. In the *Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta*¹ [Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma], his very first public statement to the world, the Buddha revealed the crux of his teaching, namely, the Four Noble Truths—suffering, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation. In the well-known advice to Malunkyaputta, who challenged the Buddha to answer the ten questions,² known as ‘unexplained,’ the Buddha refused to answer his questions, but laid emphasis on what he taught and what he did not teach. What he taught, the Buddha said, is the four noble truths.³ In another instance the Buddha says: Monks, due to non-comprehension and non-realization of these four noble truths you and I have been wandering in

1 *Vinaya* I: 10-11, Also in *Samyutta-nikaya* [sacca-samyutta] V: 420-424. [Translation: (Bhikkhu Bodhi 2002 vol.II: 1843-1847)].

2 The ten questions are: Is the world eternal? Is it not eternal? Is the world finite? Is it infinite? Are the body and the soul the same? Are they different? Does the enlightened person exist after death? Does he not? Does he both exist and not exist? Does he neither exist nor does not exist? These questions appear as fourteen in the Mahayana literature.

3 *Culamalunkyaputta-sutta*, *Majjhima-nikaya* (63). [Translation: (Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 2001: 533-537)].

Where is the One Dharma to Which all Dharmas Return?: The Horizon of Buddhist Inclusivism in Religious Pluralism

Yong-pyo Kim

The Present study is concerned with the problem of Buddhist attitude toward other religions and religious pluralism from the Mahayana perspective. The Buddha discoursed with many religious people which enabled him to see the true nature of dharmas, from a diversity of religion's claims on truth, in accordance with dependent origination. But at the same time, Buddha emphasized generosity and peace towards other religions. Open inclusivism in religious pluralism towards other religions is a preferred attitude by contemporary Buddhists. By embracing the twin ideas of ultimate truth as emptiness and Buddhism as open and boundless, in its foundational principles and religious expression, we may potentially inherit dharma by helping others through dialogue to attain their own enlightenment. In this manner of dialogue we can obtain peace which is naturally desirable to Buddhists. In general, Buddhists are inclusive in their interpretation of Buddhist doctrines but tend to be pluralistic

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toward religious experiences. As a religion embracing inclusive and pluralistic thought, Buddhism has a doctrinal base which supports understanding and cooperation with other religions, particularly the Mahayana teachings on emptiness, with its dynamic potential to promote harmony by dissolving all exclusive boundaries concerning doctrines or traditions. It is a maturity of perspective which offers opportunity for dialogue and a conceptual framework that can acknowledge the essence of all religions.

Key words: Buddhist Inclusivism, Religious Pluralism,
Emptiness, Dialogue, One Dharma.

I. The Problem of Pluralism in the Age of Dialogue

Presently the world religious community is connected to global generation through pluralism.¹ Discourse on pluralism can no longer be avoided, and for societies where there is a diversity of cultures and religions coexisting, religious pluralist values are becoming increasingly important to aid understanding and acceptance. Fortunately, religious discourse is also becoming more acceptable. Take the recent occurrence where Christians were sent by their church to Afghanistan as volunteers and were subsequently kidnapped by the Taliban, this certainly points to an urgent need for discourse. In this case, the actions of both parties gave rise to a great deal of conflict around the meaning of peace among religions which highlights just how important dialogue is.

Current issues and dilemmas around religious pluralism raise many questions for religious people everywhere and no less for Buddhists. So what is an appropriate response from the Buddhist community in this regard? With present-day pressure bearing down on all major religious bodies and

¹ Pluralism can be defined as the people's attitude towards accepting the existence of other and different faiths or principles. Accepting difference is not only a reflective attitude in the sense of how it relates to the superiority of one's own doctrinal truth, it is also the manner in which people are willing to discover cooperatively with other cultures.

The Letters of Hanam Sunim: Practice after Enlightenment and Obscurity

Ven. Chong Go

The letters of the early twentieth century sŏn master Hanam Sunim provide a unique view into his thought about spiritual practice after enlightenment. Surprisingly, they also contain clues that may help explain the lack of interest in Hanam Sunim's life and teachings in the 40 years following his death. This paper explores Hanam Sunim's thought about practice after enlightenment and the role it and other factors may have played in the obscurity that befell one of the greatest sŏn masters of the era. In addition to socio-economic influences, it was observed that Hanam Sunim's views were opposed by the majority of the leaders of the Purification Movement of the 1950's and 1960's. Perhaps not coincidentally, Hanam Sunim's teachings only began to draw attention in the early 1990's as the previous generation of leaders began to pass from positions of influence and power.

Key words: Hanam, Practice after enlightenment, Letters,
Kyŏngbong, Pojo Chinul.

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Dependent Arising in Abhidhamma Philosophy

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This paper seeks to define the Buddha's conceptions as a causal theory that is doubtless coincides with the notion of dependent arising. We know that the concept of dependent arising is core subject upon which we can indisputably resolve the problem of the previous interpretation of the general causal theory in early Buddhism. Furthermore we can understand the notion of dependent arising in the Abhidhamma philosophy in order to defining the original meaning of Buddha. Additionally we survey the general nature of the law of causation to specify the dependent arising, but which is a little different from the notion of dependent arising in our survey. There are four kinds of general characteristic states that are similar ideas to the law of causation, i.e., suchness, necessity, invariability and conditionality in the Abhidhamma philosophy. These four characteristics form the supporting basis for dependent arising in the Buddhist schools. Lastly, this paper has a brief overview of the dependent arising for the careful study that seems to us highly structured and well worth for the investigation of ideas viewed the Abhidhamma philosophy.

Key words: Dependent Arising, Suchness, Necessity, Invariability, Conditionality.

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Review of *Cultivating Original Enlightenment:*

*Wonhyo's Exposition
of the Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra,*
by Robert E. Buswell, Jr.

Charles Muller

*This is a review of the book *Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wōnhyo's Exposition of the Vajrasamādhi-Sūtra*, by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., published by the University of Hawaii Press (2007). This volume, the first to be published in the *Collected Works of Wōnhyo* series, contains the translation of a single text by Wōnhyo, the *Kūmgang Sammaegyōng Non*, along with a substantial introduction. The contents of the introduction are discussed in depth, along with some comments regarding the content and character of the translation.*

Key words: Wōnhyo, Vajrasamādhi, Amalavijñāna, Tathāgatagarbha,
Geumgang sammaeyeong non, Buddha-nature, Meditation.

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