



Master Wonhyo as Lay Master Soseong

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Master Wonhyo as Lay Master Soseong*

Heejae Lee

Abstract

The essence of the philosophy of Master Wonhyo (元曉, 617-86) centrally focused on interaction between the secular world and the spiritual world. His notion of spirituality places emphasis on deeper interaction and conventional communication between those two. Master Wonhyo's philosophy remains within the context of Mahayana Buddhism, featuring certain commonalities with the Vimalakirti Sutra. We know that Wonhyo wrote the Yumagyeong Jongyo (Thematic Essentials of the Vimalakirti Sutra) in one volume, and the Yumagyeong Yakchan (Brief Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra) in seven volumes, although these books were lost. His understanding was based on Bodhisattva practice as well as the spirit of Layman Vimalakirti (Yuma in Korean). The trend of modern research is to only focus on Master Wonhyo, and place less emphasis on his alter-ego Layman Soseong's position

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and activities. That is to say, researchers overlook his role as a layman who lived with the common people for a long time and influenced them in many ways. His conception of spirituality was not to escape from worldly affairs and the secular world, but rather he sought profound engagement with society and holy nirvana within this world. Moreover, his religious practice didn't intend to escape from this sin-tainted world, but rather one's freedom to experience the Jeongto (淨土, Pure Land) within this world. His communication with common people was not only his determination but also his real understanding that the Jeongto and the notion of Nirvana are deeply entrenched within this Sabasegye (娑婆世界, saḥā, samsara, the secular world of suffering). Wonhyo knew that renouncing the world (becoming a monk) meant leaving home and all worldly affairs behind; however, he was worried that such a self-centered practice would injure Mahayana Buddhism's superior objective of salvation for all. This philosophy of non-dualism is a core idea of his spiritual quest.

Key words: Non-dualism, Interaction, Communication, Bodhisattva,
Wonhyo, Yuma-gyeong (*Vimalakirti Sutra*).

I. Introduction

Korean Buddhism has been led by *bigu* (比丘, *bhikkhu*, ordained monks) and *biguni* (比丘尼, *bhikkhunī*, ordained female monks) who have been affiliated with the traditional Buddhist orders that have in the past frequently neglected the participation of laymen and laywomen. Furthermore, most important Buddhist communities and institutes are also being led by monks, and there have been very few laypersons serving in leadership roles in such activities. This means that the Korean Buddhist groups are divided into two: first, the monastic community (holy-group), and second, the lay Buddhists (worldly-group). The traditional monastic community believes that the true Buddhist practices should only be performed by monks. There is a Korean term *seongsok* (聖俗), denoting a dichotomy in which seong means belonging

to the holy group (monks), and sok means being vulgar or unrefined (a common layman). Korea's monastic-centric Buddhism needs to reconsider these matters in the context of recognition of the lay-focused attitude and activities of Master Wonhyo (元曉, 617-86), who has long been revered as one of Korea's greatest monks.

Within all Wonhyo's contributions to Korean Buddhism, it is worth mentioning that he re-conceptualized the doctrinal concept of "emptiness" (sunyata) as non-dualism. It is no wonder that he relied heavily on friendship with lay Buddhists, because he lived with the common people during his spiritual and doctrinal practice. Not only this, but he also called himself a *Soseong geosa* (stay-at-home disciple), and therefore this notion needs to be explored so as to understand the real spirit of Master Wonhyo. Moreover, he researched the concept of *Yuma geosa* (Vimalakirti the stay-at-home disciple), a role that has long been a typical element of the Mahayana tradition. Wonhyo's ways of propagation through dancing and singing from village to village are similar to Yuma-geosa's activities in ancient India. These activities are a kind of Bodhisattva practice of endless mercy towards the common people. Wonhyo's description of non-dualism emphasizes a deeper interaction and collaboration between monks and lay-people.

II. Wonhyo's Perspective on the *Yumagyeong*

The *Yumagyeong* (維摩詰所說經, *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra*) is a Mahayana scripture that emphasizes the roles of lay Buddhists, recounting Yuma's wonderful practice amid his worldly affairs. It describes Yuma and the great principles of Buddha discussing Mahayana Buddhism. As the story is narrated in the text, monks once visited Yuma to discuss doctrinal issues when he was on his sickbed. For most of the time Yuma was passive, and at last, his silence on dharmic issues came to symbolize the truth of Mahayana that lies beyond words, which gradually became a part of this sutra. It emphasizes the importance of lay Buddhists and significance of dharma-practice at home surrounded by fellow lay-devotees. The "Harmony

Thought” prescribed by Wonhyo is similar to Yuma’s non-dual spirit that highly valued the status of lay Buddhism (*Sinpyeon jejong gyojang chongnok*, Vol. 1).

In this regard, the first Korean research on the *Yuma-gyeong* appears to have been performed by Wonhyo during the 7th century. After his descriptive research, many commentaries on it were published in book format during the Unified Silla period (統一新羅, 668-935). The *Muguching gyeongso* (無垢稱經疏, *Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra*) was written and published in six volumes, which is credited to a person named Gyeongheung (憬興, birth and death dates are unknown). Also, the *Yumageong yogan* (Selections from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*) was written by Dunryun (遁倫), whose birth and death dates are also unknown, during this period. However these books are not preserved in their original forms. These facts show that excellent research projects were conducted on *Vimalakirti* during the Unified Silla period. Wonhyo’s *Yumageong jongyo* (維摩經宗要, *Thematic Essentials of the Vimalakirti Sutra*) and *Yumageong yakchan* (*Brief Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra*, in seven volumes) are no longer extant, although, according to Japanese records, Koreans made copies of the *Yumageong jongyo* in 735 (Lee 2009; Sukushi 1996, 55). The listing of Buddhist books of Japan compiled in 753 names Wonhyo’s *Yumageongso* (*Commentary on the Vimalakirti Sutra*). According to the *Joseon wangjo sillok* (*Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*), Wonhyo’s *Yumageong jongyo* was a single volume published as a part of the *Tripitaka* sent to the Yugu Kingdom (Okinawa Island, now a part of Japan).¹

Besides Wonhyo’s scholarly accomplishments, he continued the Bodhisattva spirit throughout his life in a way similar to Yuma. His typical

¹ King Sejo gifted some books to an envoy from the Yugu Kingdom who stayed at the Taepyeong-gwan Guesthouse. The books sent to Japan are listed as following. *Seongdogi* (成道記), *Beophwageong* (法華經), *Beonyeok myeong-ui* (翻譯名義), *Kisillon* (起信論), *Yeongga jip* (永嘉集), *Daebisingyeong* (大悲心經), *Wongak gyeong* (圓覺經), *Sagyovui* (四教儀), *Neungeom euihae* (楞嚴義海), *Dodeokgyeong* (道德經), *Beopsu* (法數), *Hamheadang wongak gyeong* (涵虛堂圓覺經), *Geumgang gyeong* (金剛經), *Yabu jong gyeong* (治父宗鏡), *Neungeom hwahae* (楞嚴會解), *Gobong hwasang seonyo* (高峯和尚禪要), *Jinsil jujip* (眞實珠集), *Neungeomgyeong* (楞嚴經), *Byeogamrok* (碧巖錄), *Suryukmun* (水陸文), *Yumahilgyeong* (維摩詰經), *Geumganggyeong ogahae* (金剛經五家解), *Nungeomgyeongso* (楞嚴經疏), *Amitageongso* (阿彌陀經疏), *Yumageong jongyo* (維摩經宗要), *Beop gyeongron* (法經論) and *Gwanmuryangsugyeong uigi* (觀無量壽經義記) (*Joseon wangcho sillok* [Annals of the Joseon Dynasty], vol. 43).

emancipated activity is a kind of Bodhisattva's mercy that means sharing pleasures and pains with common people, just as Yuma had shared them. There were even instances of Yuma going to bars and gambling houses for joining with the people to teach them, but ignoring the Buddhist precepts prescribed for spiritual masters. As it is described:

When he gambled with people, he redeemed them; when he visited several cities, he benefited their residents; when he gave lectures, he led the Mahayana truth; when he visited school campuses, he taught children what is right; when he entered erotic places, he demonstrated the conceit of sensual pleasures; and when he entered drinking houses, he never lost his will. (T. 14, 539)

Wonhyo learned the spirit of the Yumagyeong from Master Bodeok who came to the southern area of Korea from the Goguryeo Kingdom. According to a record of National Master Daegak, Wonhyo and Uisang visited Bodeok and learned the truths of Buddhism from him through discussion (*Daegak guksa munjip* 17, 8).

It also needs to be mentioned that there is a half-relief statue of Yuma in the Seokguram Grotto (751 CE), and it was constructed according to the depiction of the Yumagyeong's story of visiting his sickbed mentioned above. This reference showed that the people understood the sophisticated teachings of the *Yumagyeong* during the Unified Silla period. This grotto-shrine was designed and narrated with Yuma's story in the upper side of the hall in order to illustrate the scene of the discourse that took place between Munsu bosal (文殊菩薩, Manjusri the Bodhisattva of Wisdom) and Yuma, and there is also carving of the motif of the Buddha's 10 principles in the lower part of the hall. This ancient Seokguram grotto is a unique place, and it has been considered by some scholars as an artwork depicting the *Yumagyeong* (Choi, Wan-soo 2009). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that it expresses the spirit of Yuma's thought through sculptural representation.

During the Goryeo Dynasty (高麗王朝, 918–1392), a famous poet named Lim Chun (birth and death dates unknown) looked at a portrait of Wonhyo and described him as 'a Yuma.' He wrote a poem about the pine

tree dedicated to Gwanse-eum-bosal (觀世音菩薩, Avalokitesvara the Bodhisattva of Compassion) on the west side of Naksan-sa (洛山寺, Potalaka Mountain Temple) in the late 12th century, as follows:

I have heard, he is an old Yuma;
 Let his staff fly to Heaven, it passes ten thousand miles;
 Munsu bosal visited to wish him to get well;
 He will return to his town Vaishali without works.
 (Donghaeggi 5, 258: *Seohajip* [Collection of Seoha])

Unfortunately, most of Wonhyo's works in book format have not been preserved, and yet we can understand that his thought was deep-rooted in Mahayana Buddhism with an emphasis on non-dualism and harmony with worldly affairs.

A. Wonhyo as the Lay-Master Soseong

Wonhyo's non-dualism is highly emphasized in the lay Buddhism that was portrayed in the *Yumagyeong*. It is documented that Wonhyo is the father of Princess Yoseok's son named Seol Chong (薛聰, 650-740)² who later became a great Confucian scholar during the early Unified Silla period. Thus, Wonhyo considered himself as "Soseong (小性)" or "Bokseong (卜性)", and he was popularly known for performing dharma propagation freely by associating with common people (T. 50: "Biography of Hwangryongsa Wonhyo").

Even though Wonhyo's commentaries on the *Yumagyeong* are not extant, his ideas described elsewhere are parallel to its spirit. One of his nicknames was Saebu (塞部), which means Ubasae (Upasaka, 優波塞)—a male lay Buddhist, though this is a controversial issue and needs more scholarly debate.³ Furthermore,

2 Kim, Busik wrote "When his son Seol Chong visited Japan as an envoy, Japanese monks welcomed him as a grandson of Wonhyo-geosa, saying that they had read Wonhyo's writings" (*Samguk Sagi* 46: "Yeoljeon" [Historical Record of the Three Kingdoms]).

3 Youngtae Kim interpreted it as *Saebyeok* (Dawn). "On Saebu, Wonhyo's nickname in late Silla" (Kim, Youngtae 1992, 145-57); Mozhizuki Sinko interpreted it as *Ubasae* (layman) (Mochizuki 1922, 227).

Master Wonhyo made a drum from a gourd and composed a musical song called *Muaega* (No Obstacle Song), which originated from the slogan *ilche muaein* (meaning a person with no obstacles or attachments to things) and could be delivered in one sitting along with chanting the *Hwaeomgyeong* (華嚴經, *Avatamsaka* or *Flower Garland Sutra*). It must be recorded here that Wonhyo visited every area of the nation and propagated the Buddha-dharma through his singing, dancing and teaching so as to let people understand its meaning, and his efforts were conducive even for children and poor, uneducated people. His effort had a tremendous impact on society because he simplified the sutra readings and further associated them with melodies so that the people could chant the mantra “*Namu Amita-bul*” with enthusiasm. (*Samguk yusa* 5: “Wonhyo”).

Wonhyo even grew his hair long and took off his monastic robes, preferring to wear lay-people’s clothing. He found common people’s dress to be a potent tool in order to associate with them easily, and also recognized the importance of singing and dancing to disseminate Buddha’s teaching to the masses; it is in this context that he, conceivably, was not a typical traditional monk as we find in the mainstream of Korean Buddhist monasticism.

However, it is not clear when it was that he abandoned monastic status and returned to leading a lay Buddhist life; perhaps, it was just after his one-night affair with Princess Yoseok in 649, or after his final enlightenment during the incident with a skull in an old tomb (T. 50: “Biography of Hwangryongsa Wonhyo”). We may speculate that Wonyho might have returned to society and engaged in worldly affairs by calling himself a “lay-master” just after his son Seol Chong was born.

During the Goryeo Dynasty, Lee, Gyubo wrote a poem entitled Praise of Soseong after he saw the portrait of Wonhyo that was in the possession of Lee Inno. This portrait reveals Wonhyo wearing a skullcap like the Yuma figure in the Seokguram Grotto, and the depiction is as follows:



Seokguram's Yuma image



Soseong's image

[in Prof. Cho Myeong-gi's possession
(Kim, Sang-hyun 2000, 328)]

The shaved head resembles that of Wonhyo, the long hair and wearing of a skullcap makes the figure resemble Layman Soseong, and “One body portraying one thousand shapes with easily pointing fingers, and the performing by two appearances are only a play. (*Dongguk Isanggukjip* 19: 小性居士贊 并序 Praise of Layman Soseong)

When Lee, Gyubo visited Wonhyobang Hermitage located in Buan County, he observed the portrait of Wonhyo wearing a skullcap as revealing a lay appearance. He interpreted the portrait “as if Soseong came back to this world again; making a bold bow to him courteously.”

For a long time, most researchers have regarded Wonhyo only as a holy Buddhist monk. They never regarded him as Layman Soseong who joined with the common people to teach them a simplified Buddhism through his newly invented way of preaching with singing and dancing, serving as a lay Buddhist. Therefore we need more scholarly interpretations to examine the role of Wonhyo as a “Lay-Master” Buddhist since we have some archeological evidence in a form of that Goryeo Dynasty portrait of Wonhyo featuring him wearing a skullcap like Lay-Master Yuma. It seems that the disappearance or ignorance of this portrait indicates a biased interpretive view which has been presented about Wonhyo.

The existing portraits of Wonhyo have primarily been depicted as *Guksa*

(National Master), *Seongsa* (Holy Master) and *Daesa* (Great Master) since the Goryeo Dynasty, but the portrait of Layman *Soseong* has not remained except a portrait in Prof. Cho, Myeong-gi's possession. Questions arise: Why has the portrait of Layman *Soseong* so thoroughly disappeared? Does the status of Layman *Soseong* mean an apostate monk? And if that is true, then it would be a misconstruing of the facts and it would be an obliteration of Wonhyo's true spirit.

III. Living the Non-dualism of Holy and Secular

It has been repeatedly discussed that Wonhyo's sexual encounter and involvement in worldly affairs was interpreted as the activity or practice of a Bodhisattva. Wonhyo's unrestricted freedom of activity and social engagement has been misunderstood, and he was even criticized for violation of the Buddhist precepts (Vinaya).

According to the *Samguk Yusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*), some of Wonhyo's disciples such as Eomchang and Gwangdeok were prominent Buddhists. There is a story that Gwangdeok kept the pure precepts and even recited the name of *Amitabul* (Amitabha) and practiced the sixteen contemplations by sitting in meditation every night. Once Gwangdeok had passed away, his friend Eomchang proposed to Gwangdeok's widow, but he was scolded by her. She had never enjoyed sexual pleasure with her husband. They were only partners for Buddhist practice. Thereafter, Eomchang studied the method of 16 visualizations handed down from Wonhyo.

Wonhyo did not maintain his monastic monk life, and he did communicate with the people due to his realization and perception over the *Jeongto* (淨土, Pure Land) where he understood that Nirvana has a connection with worldly affairs and everyday suffering. This idea originated from the *Yumagyeong*, highlighting the notion of non-dualism in greater detail by emphasizing the connotations of lay Buddhism. This is the basic spirit of Wonhyo as a Bodhisattva practitioner, which led him to live his later life as a layman.

The *Yumagyeong* gives descriptions such as: When serving the people

he does not wish for payment. When accepting the burden of the people's suffering, he gives them happiness by his efforts. His mind fits to be equal with humble people, and to see them as equal to Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. When listening to a sutra he has not heard before, he listens carefully and does not doubt its authenticity. Do not doubt about the *Seongmun* (Shravaka, Voice-Hearer) and do not violate commandments with others. Do not be jealous of people who take care of others, and do not grow apathetic. Always reflect on your own faults and do not denounce other's weak-points. Do not desire to make a show by giving only to honorable charities (T. 14, 553).

In fact, Wonhyo did not entirely adhere to any form. He also did not cling to his holiness, and was able to stay beyond all human desires as he had no fixed ideas. This is an idea reflected in the concept of *sunyata* (emptiness) and which is proximate to the concepts in the *Yumagyeong*:

Sometimes appearing as a lascivious woman, leading to a lascivious man.

Earlier lured out by desire, yet later leading to Buddha's wisdom.
Sometimes become a lord of a city, sometimes lead by becoming a merchant.

As the national master and subject helps people's profits.
(T. 14, 550)

This spirit is similar to the notion of Wonhyo's non-dualism, meaning to communicate and interact with people and share their joys and sorrows together.

Wonhyo's philosophy was described in this poem:

It is not a conventional truth, nor a worldly truth.
It is not being, nor emptiness.
Thus all name it the dharma's form. (H. 1, 480)

Further, he says that even the inherent character of the ordinary people and that of the holy man are non-two; wise people recognize well that the ordinary and holy or even birth and death are neither same nor different. It is neither Being nor Nothingness, neither Ingress nor Egress; there are only all

of the Buddhas here (H. 1, 530). In Wonhyo's view, it is not a significant concern for a true spiritual and enlightened one to renounce worldly affairs or to stay home and deal with everyday life, but what is more important is whether you have a pure mind or not. Even if someone leaves home for monkhood, it is not meaningful if they are still enchained with greed.

He criticized those monks who were only focused on meditation for self-interest and ignored the well-being of other folks. He regarded Buddhist precepts as less imperative than having a mission of devotion to the welfare of others, by association with ordinary people who stay at home.

It has been said that "at one moment there is a shot, but it is hard to distinguish between right and wrong. Therefore, what one desires in this world is to have fame with respect and recognition by folks for their work. Moreover, one may share religious ideas in order to seek cheap fame with the public, which finally makes such people become deluded and looking for opportunities to deceive others. If monks only hope to have fame as holy-men alone, they will not be appreciated by the common people. Such actions and aspirations only destroy the true notion of the Buddha-dharma, and thus only produce sins that finally result in accumulation of bad karma in the present life." (H. 1, 581)

Wonhyo's ideas further reflect the meaning of "good fortune" as follows:

A man that enjoys good fortune in the present world is proud, and relaxes with his easy earnings. Even though he maintains righteous deeds and does not commit any faults, he raises himself high and disdains others, and he scolds and disrespects them for even small violations of the practitioner precepts. Such men, although they practice small good deeds, eventually violate the great prohibitions. What role karma plays to change good fortune into disaster, is nothing more than this. (H. 1, 582)

Wonhyo regarded small good deeds to attain fame as not enough to attain the higher stages of spirituality as prescribed for attaining Bodhisattva-hood. Outwardly, some people may look holy with refined

manners, but those who seek honor while keeping another side of their face hidden are just dwelling in hypocrisy.

The spirit of Mahayana which Wonhyo understood seeks enduring communication with common folks. Imperatively, this spirit lashed together with social obligations is parallel to the notion of Yuma—more important than to clinging to minor precepts. The *dalgi bosal* (a Bodhisattva that accurately evaluates people's levels) could save common folks by his compassion. Wonhyo interpreted such good fortune through the *dalgi* Bodhisattva precepts, whose activity is not to commit sins but rather to enjoy good fortune (Choi, Wonshik 1999, 85). Wonhyo regarded social engagement as having high value and promoted people to work for the welfare of all sentient beings or common people. He initiated a tradition to educate people through simple chanting, singing and dancing by understanding the level of common people, and adjusting the level of his teachings accordingly. And in his view, these were altruistic deeds as a Bodhisattva, purely for the benefit of sentient beings or common people, who were seeking a simpler form of preaching in order to understand the Buddha's teachings.

Wonhyo's perception of the *Beophwagyeong* (法華經, *Lotus Sutra*) is as follows:

the sentient being's Sabasegye (娑婆世界, *sahā, samsara*, secular world of suffering) is also a Nirvana world. Therefore, it is a very wide world demanding more assistance by means of vibrant instructions. The appearance of the Triple World is called the sentient being's world, and that is a Nirvana world. Not a single sentient being would be left to the world without Nirvana, which is the main potential idea of Mahayana Buddhism, and it is called the One Buddha Vehicle. (H. 1, 488)

Therefore, he does not seek to escape from the hold of common folks. He tried to seek Nirvana together with the sentient beings or people. He never wanted to escape from the responsibility of worldly affairs; rather he made enormous efforts to establish the Jeongto in this present life, right here in this ordinary world. This is the core spirit of Wonhyo, and for this reason, he

does not distinguish between or separate the two worlds through the division of monastic life from lay life. In his view, it is very important to transmit the Bodhisattva's mission to seek salvation for all through the Buddha's wisdom and save the folks who are leading lay lives. Moreover, Wonhyo neither lived with the monastic community nor lived a fully lay life, because he considered both ways of living to be enfolded with each other. As he explained, "if one lives with great mercy and directly practices *seon* (禪, meditation) and *banya* (般若, wisdom; *prajñā*), and it falls into *Hinayana* (small vehicle), then it would be an obstacle for one to follow the Bodhisattva Path and stay within the monastic community. And if one values mercy but does not practice *seon* or *banya*, then one falls into the fold of ordinary living, which would not be the Bodhisattva Path (H. 1, 662).

Moreover, he wrote:

Bodhisattva! There are two forms. Even if someone does not leave home, he also does not cling to staying home. Even if someone does not wear a monk's robe, but they accomplish the *Pratidesanya* (250 precepts for monks in the Vinaya), even though they have not reached the Bodhisattva's position, but if they reflect on themselves with true minds, accomplish sacred results and follow the Bodhisattva Path, they will later reach the Buddha's wisdom. (H. 1, 647)

Wonhyo was worried about falling into the Hinayana tradition, because he considered it a practice with fewer reformative opportunities of salvation for everyone, but rather it only provides an opportunity for individual salvation. Meanwhile, considering it to be a single mission devoted for sentient beings or common people would also be inaccurate. Therefore, the real Bodhisattva Path requires a more balanced way of thinking and practicing of strong deeds. However, Wonhyo emphasized Lay Buddhism and active participation of Buddhists, because he started to propagate the dharma in a time when monastic-centric Buddhism prevailed in practice.

IV. Conclusion

In our historical documents, Wonhyo is often mentioned as a great Master of Korean Buddhism in ways that seem to ignore or downplay his lay Buddhist life. However, there are pros and cons as far as his philosophy is concerned. We should not disregard and ignore his journey as “Layman Soseong.” He must have also been a holy monk and a great scholar at this time. Meanwhile, it is documented that he had a biological son with Princess Yoseok and later enjoyed parenthood as the father of Seol, Chong, even calling himself “Layman Soseong.” Especially, he performed free activities by joining with common folk, and he propagated dharma to them through his innovative ways of singing, dancing and drinking. Such actions and ways of teaching are very similar to the way that the figure Yuma (Vimalakirti) applied during his teaching history. He was criticized by the monastic community of his time for employing his own innovative method of teaching. Even though he was criticized and blamed for violating Buddhist monastic precepts, he remained passive towards such criticism.

His practice in the role of a lay Buddhist is a matter of historical fact. The available archeological sources attest that he was a socially active Buddhist master of his time. From the available Goryeo Dynasty sources on a portrait of Wonhyo, he was depicted wearing lay-clothes and a skullcap. He annotated the *Yumagyeong*, which he interpreted as a philosophy of liberation. Moreover, his unhindered deeds originated from the concept of *Sunyata* of no-attachment. During the Unified Silla Dynasty, there appears to have been a high spirit among lay Buddhists who stayed at home and practiced the Buddha-dharma with great zeal. There are references that even though Masters Gwangdeok and Eomchang had led family lives and even stayed at home, they did not cling to sensual pleasures with their families. Rather they practiced the Buddha-dharma by following all of the prescribed sixteen contemplations. And a similar method was applied by Wonhyo in order to bring the Buddha-dharma to the doors of common people. It provided an opportunity for lay-people who were not capable of reading and memorizing

scriptures written in classical Chinese language with quotations of Sanskrit words. Therefore, this kind of layman's life did not violate the Buddhist precepts.

Wonhyo's idea of non-dualism laid greater stress on lay life. That only the monastic community could lead truthful lives was a biased idea in Wonhyo's view. However, as historical descriptions reveal the true facts of Wonhyo's times, in which most of the Buddhist communities, focused on monastic-centric practice, appeared to have been biased against lay Buddhists and even ignored the religious interests of the masses. The spirit of Mahayana Buddhism is not divided into two parts such as the Jeongto and Saba-segye; nor birth and death and monastic and lay lifestyles. The more important thing is to establish a Pure Land in this world and seek Nirvana for all sentient beings whether they are monks or lay-people. In this spirit Master Wonhyo also sought to fulfill the ideal of a holy life by maintaining his connection with common people as a lay Buddhist.

Abbreviations

- H* *Hanguk Bulgyo Jeonseo* (韓國佛教全書, Collected works of Korean Buddhism) [followed by volume, page, and horizontal column]. Seoul: Dongguk Univ. Press, 1977–2004.
- T* *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo* (大正新脩大藏經, Japanese edition of the Buddhist Canon) [followed by volume, page, and horizontal column]. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–35)

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