



Chapter 5 : The One Mind and the Encompassing Understanding of Reality in Wonhyo and Karl Jaspers

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Chapter 5

The One Mind and the Encompassing:* Understanding of Reality in Wonhyo and Karl Jaspers

Ock Hee Shin

INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to compare the philosophical thoughts of Wonhyo and Karl Jaspers. The main theme of this comparative study will be the conception of reality, which is presented by Wonhyo in his doctrine of the one mind, and by Jaspers in his theory of the encompassing (das Umgreifende).

Despite the long temporal and wide cultural differences that lie between the two thinkers, the understanding of reality in the thought of Wonhyo (617~686), who lived in the 7th century and thought in the tradition of Korean Mahayana Buddhism, and the understanding of reality in the thought of Karl Jaspers (1883~1969), who lived in 20th century Germany and thought in the tradition of Western philosophy, are amazingly similar. This paper will point out, compare, and clarify points held in common by Wonhyo and Jaspers concerning the nature of reality. Disagreements and contrasting views held by the two thinkers will also be investigated.

Wonhyo's doctrine of the one mind and Jaspers's "Periechontologie" are comparatively investigated, focusing on the following three aspects: 1. The nature of reality conceived from the dimension of ordinary human thought, which is bound to subject-object-dichotomy. 2. The nature of reality conceived in terms of its relation with the phenomenal world. 3. The nature of reality conceived in its

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relation with the phenomenal sphere of human freedom. The first is presented under the topic of “Absolute Emptiness and Absolute Nothingness,” the second under the topic of “Essence-function-scheme and Subject-Object-scheme,” and the third under the topic of “Dharmakaya and the hidden Transcendence.”

THE ABSOLUTE EMPTINESS AND THE ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS

Wonhyo’s doctrine of the one mind and Jaspers’s periechontology coincide in that they are not the result of metaphysical speculations, but theoretical devices designed for the communication of the inner experience of the absolute reality which cannot be explained by any kinds of philosophical theory. Just as Wonhyo’s doctrine of the one mind is a theoretical device for the transmission of the Tathata experience of Mahayana Buddhist enlightenment, Jaspers’s theory of the encompassing is a theoretical point of the present reality of being as transcendence, which is experienced by the founding “Existenz” at boundary situations.

Furthermore, the experience of the one mind in Wonhyo and that of transcendence in Jaspers share important common features. “The one mind” of Wonhyo and “the Encompassing” of Jaspers refer to the non-objectifiable reality of being of which the experiencing consciousness is aware. Thus, it is impossible for us to understand what the one mind and the encompassing mean until we can break through limit of our ordinary objective thinking which is based on the subject-object-dichotomy.

If we can define mysticism as a theory of experience of being beyond subject-object-dichotomy, Wonhyo’s thought of the one mind and Jaspers’s philosophy of the encompassing can both be classified as mysticism.¹ The characteristic feature of the mystical experience of being is that it cannot be either thought of, nor spoken of in any ordinary way of thinking or speaking. In other words, because of its non-objectifiable nature the mystical experience of being cannot be known to anyone but the person who has attained the experience himself. Therefore, the experience aside, words or theories that describe or explain the mystical experience of the one mind or the encompassing, hold no meaning. Wonhyo points out this out with his famous saying that the term one mind is used to put an end to words, just as though one stops voices with a voice.²

¹ Jaspers’s philosophy has been more than often characterized as mysticism by various scholars; for example, Wolfgang Philipp criticizes Jaspers’s philosophy as “New Buddhism,” and Paul Henning Jørgensen as “die Doppelheit der Mystik”: Philipp, Wolfgang, *Religiöse Strömungen unserer Gegenwart*, S. 116. Jørgensen, Paul Henning, *Die Bedeutung des Subjekt-Objekt-Verhältnisses für die Theologie*, Hamburg-Bergstadt, S. 254.

In Jaspers's philosophy we also find similar expressions about the nature of the experience of being. For Jaspers, as in Wonhyo, the characteristic of the experience of being is silence before being (das Schweigen vor dem Sein) and sinking into the stillness of being (die Stille des Seins). According to Jaspers, the encompassing itself is transcendence that cannot be known but only be experienced by the "Existenz" standing before transcendence as its uninterpretable ultimate foundation. Here, we can notice that Jaspers's thought of the encompassing approaches very close to Wonhyo's mysticism of the one mind.³

Furthermore, there is another significant common feature that we can easily notice in Wonhyo's thought of the one mind and Jaspers's periechontology. Wonhyo and Jaspers hold in common that, instead of sinking into the silent mystical meditation, both of them search for the philosophical method of thinking and speaking about the unthinkable and unspeakable. Moreover, it is surprising to note the similar nature of the methods of 'thinking the unthinkable' presented by both Wonhyo and Jaspers.

In the case of Wonhyo, in spite of a strong emphasis on the non-objective character of the enlightenment experience, he treads beyond mysticism in his equally strong emphasis upon the fact that the use of language is inevitable as soon as we begin to think and speak. In other words, according to Wonhyo, even though we use the term "one mind" or "Suchness" to put an end to words, we cannot say that we thereby stop using words, because whatever it may be that we say, we cannot do it without using words.⁴ For this reason, Wonhyo is not only a mystic, but also a philosopher.

Wonhyo employs Nagarjuna's logic of emptiness for the elucidation of the absolutely non-objectifiable nature of the one mind. Wonhyo characterizes Nagarjuna's logic of emptiness as the logic of limitless destruction, and maintains that enlightenment to the one mind is attained by the practice of cessation which carries out infinite destruction of thinking by means of thinking itself.

On similar lines, Jaspers uses the logic of infinite negation developed by German mystics for his elucidation of the encompassing as absolute transcendence. Especially noteworthy is that Jaspers took the idea of "Durchbruch" from Cusanus,

² Wonhyo, *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* (T. 1844, vol. 44, pp. 202a-206a) Trans. by Lee Ki-young, In: *Buddhist Thought of Korea*, p. 59. Jaspers, *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung*, München 1962, S. 195f.

³ Sometimes Jaspers himself seems to define his own philosophy as a kind of mysticism: "Mystik nennt man aber ... auch die Seinsspekulation, die mit ihren dialektischen Bewegungen in hellstem Bewußsein unter Verschwinden alles Gegenständlichen durch das Denken selbst des Seins innerwerden läßt." *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung*, S. 422.

⁴ Wonhyo, *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, Trans. by Lee Ki-young, Op. Cit., p. 57.

and also Meister Eckart, to be the guiding principle of his philosophical methodology.⁵ Jaspers's so-called "transcending thinking," employed as his basic philosophical operation, is but the operation of "destroying thinking by means of thinking itself," that is, the operation of "Durchbruch" used by German mystics.

The close similarity of Wonhyo's one mind philosophy and Jaspers's philosophy of the encompassing can be attributed to the close likeness of the logic of emptiness in Madhyamika philosophy to the logic of absolute nothingness of German mysticism. Nagarjuna's logic of emptiness and that of absolute nothingness of the German mystics hold in common that they are both methods of negating thinking by means of thinking itself.

However, it is important to note that despite their close agreement Wonhyo's logic of emptiness and Jaspers's "transcending thinking" show uncompromisable essential difference.

In Wonhyo's logic of emptiness, the objectifying thinking itself reached its limit where all the objectivities disappear. In contrast to the logic of emptiness that ends in the dissolution of objectifying thinking, Jaspers "philosophische Grundoperation" or "transcending thinking" can bring forth only the awareness of the limit of objective thinking, and can never overcome the subject-object-scheme of our ordinary thinking. In Jaspers's philosophy, subject-object-split is the basic structure of our thinking which is inescapable for us as finite human beings. Therefore, according to Jaspers, objectifying thinking is inevitable as long as we think. The outcome of Jaspers so-called "Grundoperation" ends not in the dissolution of objective thinking, but in the transformation of our consciousness of being which arises within the sphere of objective thinking, namely, indirect awareness of being beyond the limit of objective thinking that arises in our consciousness when our thinking is pushed to its extreme limit in its futile search for the encompassing. Such transformation of the awareness of being brings, as Jaspers emphasizes, only the "indirect" ascertainment of the encompassing as unknowable absolute transcendence, experienced at the boundary of objective thinking.⁶

Whereas Wonhyo's logic of emptiness can break through all the objectivities and bring forth the "direct" experience of reality as the one mind in non-objective unio mystica, Jaspers's philosophical logic can never step out of the fundamental scheme of subject-object-dichotomy. Therefore, from the standpoint of Buddhist emptiness (*Sunyata*), Jaspers's view of reality as the encompassing is still bound to objectifying thinking, even though the encompassing is understood as the absolute

⁵ Cf. Jaspers, *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung*, S. 385-405.

⁶ Jaspers, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, München 1953, S. 28-37; *Philosophie III*, Berlin, 1932, S. 36-70. Jaspers, *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung*, S. 131-135.

nothingness that is neither subject nor object but the origin of the subject-object-split.

This kind of essential difference between Wonhyo and Jaspers comes from the fact that the Mahayana Buddhist understanding of reality as emptiness which backgrounds Wonhyo's thought follows the Mahayana-Buddhist scheme of identity of essence and function, while the Christian understanding of God as transcendence, which is an important portion of the background of Jaspers's thought, follows the monotheistic scheme of subject-object-split. This will be considered in the next section.

ESSENCE-FUNCTION-SCHEME AND SUBJECT-OBJECT-SCHEME

Wonhyo's view of the One Mind and Jaspers's idea of the Encompassing show very close similarity in that they both conceive the absolute order of reality as "immanent transcendence," emphasizing at the same time the ontological difference between the transcendent and the immanent.

In Wonhyo's thought, the one mind is truly empty in the sense that it transcends the immanent phenomenal world. In other words, the one mind is the absolute reality which can be realized only through the thorough negation of particular modes of being in the phenomenal world. However, it is important to remember that the one mind which is "truly empty" is at the same time "truly nonempty".⁷ In Wonhyo's Mahayana Buddhist metaphysics of the one mind, the absolute reality (*Nirvana*) and the phenomenal world (*Samsara*) are different but inseparable. In other words, Wonhyo's metaphysics of the one mind does not posit the one mind as the absolute transcendence outside the phenomenal world of particular beings, but tries to elucidate the fact that "the essence of all things is empty." Therefore, in Wonhyo's thought, the one mind as the absolute transcendence is at the same time the all embracing essence which is immanent in all things. This sounds like the pantheism of the West, but there is difficulty in classifying Wonhyo's thought of the one mind as pantheistic immanentism,

⁷ Wonhyo describes the dialectical two aspects of the one mind in a very poetical way in his *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana* as below: "The essence of Mahayana (One Mind) is generally (described as being) completely empty and very mysterious. (However) no matter how mysterious it may be, how could it be anywhere but in the world of the myriad phenomena? No matter how empty it may be, it is still present in the conversation of the people ... One wants to call it great, (but it) enters the interiorless and nothing remains. One wants to call (it) infinitesimal, (but it) envelops the exteriorless without exhausting itself. One might say it is something, yet everything is empty because of it. Park, Sung-Bae trans., *Wonhyo's Commentaries on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, University Microfilms International 1979, p. 121.

because Wonhyo's method of thinking is very different from that connecting the essential substance and its phenomenal modes in the Western pantheistic world-views.

The Buddhist simile of relationship between the water of the ocean and its waves serves as the expedient means to characterize the specific nature of Wonhyo's theory of Tathagata-garbha, which is quite similar but at the same time very different from, the Western pantheistic scheme of relating the world-substance and its phenomenal modes. According to this Buddhist simile, the water comprising the ocean and its waves are "not same," since the former has been turned into the latter stirred by the wind. But it is also true that the former and the latter are "not different," because the waves of the ocean cannot be separated from the water of the ocean.⁸ In the same way, the aspect of the one mind as "immanent transcendence," namely, the Tathagata-garbha (the matrix of the Tathagat, or the one mind, hidden in the phenomenal world) is neither identical with, nor different from the phenomena of the world.⁹

Wonhyo's method of thinking about this relationship of "coincidentia oppositorum" between the absolute reality of the one mind (*nirvana*) and the phenomenal world of the things (*samsara*) can be defined as "essence-function" logic.¹⁰ Wonhyo's Mahayana Buddhist logic of "essence-function" scheme grasps

⁸ Wonhyo, *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, Trans. by Lee Ki-young, Op. Cit., p. 64f. In order to illustrate the meaning of the water-wave simile of lump of Asvaghosa's "Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana," Wonhyo refers to the simile of a lump of clay and dust of a clay from the Lankavatara Sutra, and explains it: "A lump of clay and dust of a clay are neither different nor same. If a lump of clay and dust of a clay are different, it is not true that the former is made of the latter. But, in fact, the former is made of the latter; so a lump of clay and dust of a clay are not different." Wonhyo, *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁹ Wonhyo, *Ibid.*, pp. 64-70. Wonhyo explains the meaning of Tathagata-garbha as "immanent transcendence" as follows: "The eternal and imperishable is Tathagata-garbha. The eternal and imperishable Mind turns itself and moves into its phenomenal manifestations. Thus, the Mind itself and the phenomena of birth and death (the Mind as phenomena) are not separable, i.e., not different, just as water and waves are not mutually separable, when water of the sea moves by the wind into waves. The Mind (on the other hand) never loses (even in its turning into phenomena) its original self-nature that transcends phenomena of birth and death; and in this aspect, the Mind is different from phenomena of birth and death, i.e., 'not same'." Wonhyo., p. 64.

¹⁰ Sung Bae Park, a Korean specialist in Wonhyo, has written an essay in which Buddhist (especially Zen) essence-function-scheme is espoused in contrast to subject-object-scheme of Christian theism. Cf. Park, Sung Bae, "Essence-Function Versus Subject-Object Constructions," *Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment*, Albany 1983, pp. 35-42. Sung Bae Park maintains as the following: "... the basic purpose of the Buddhist essence-function construction it to establish a framework of nondualism in which no object is required for an act of faith, as is the case with the dualistic non (subject) – so (object) construction of faith in theistic 'faith in ...' construction." *Ibid.*, p. 41. Sung Bae Park calls our attention to the fact "the t'i (essence)-yung (function) construction of patriarchal (Zen) faith was developed with great clarity by Wonhyo. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

the relation between reality and phenomena as that of the water of the ocean and its waves which are “not same” and “not different” at the same time. In other words, by means of essence-function logic Wonhyo reached his view of reality centered on the principle of non-obstructive mutual interpretation of nirvana (the one mind as the absolute) and samsara (the relative phenomenal world).

Now, it becomes clear that Wonhyo’s thought of the one mind is not a metaphysical theory which is based on the ordinary objective thinking. Wonhyo’s thought of the one mind is neither transcendentalism nor simple pantheistic immanentism, but a metaphysics of enlightenment, pointing to the dimension of absolute identity that transcends beyond the distinctions of the transcendent and the immanent.

In Jaspers’s philosophy of the encompassing, being itself is also conceived as the absolute transcendence which cannot be identified with anything in the phenomenal world, but for Jaspers, as for Wonhyo, the encompassing as the absolute transcendence is at the same time the “immanent transcendence.” The absolute being itself as transcendence is inseparable from the phenomenal world, according to Jaspers. Therefore, Jaspers maintains that it is false to posit the encompassing outside the phenomenal world. This aspect of Jaspers’s thought is clearly distinguishable in his theory of the modes of the encompassing (*die Weisen des Umgreifenden*) in which he attempted to show the inseparable interrelation between the encompassing and its various phenomenal modes.¹¹ Jaspers’s theory of the modes of the encompassing can be understood as the different ways in which being itself as the absolute transcendence manifests itself in immanent phenomenal world. Furthermore, according to Jaspers’s theory of ciphers, for the absolute consciousness of the self-realizing possible “Existenz” anything in the world can become a cipher of transcendence: and there is no other way but through ciphers to encounter transcendence. In this sense, Jaspers characterizes ciphers as “immanent transcendence”,¹² maintaining that the ciphers, as immanent phenomena and being which announces itself in ciphers, are neither separable nor the same. In this sense Jaspers’s metaphysics of the encompassing appears to be a kind of pantheistic immanentism.¹³

However, Jaspers’s theory of the modes of encompassing, as well as Wonhyo’s

¹¹ Jaspers introduced his theory of the modes of the encompassing in his books, such as: *Einführung in die Philosophie*, 1950; *Vernunft und Existenz*, München 1935; *Existenzphilosophie*, München 1938; *Von der Wahrheit*, München 1947; *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung*, München 1962.

¹² Jaspers, *Philosophie III*, Berlin, 1932, S.129. Jaspers’s theory of ciphers is extensively developed in his book *Der Philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung* S. 153-429, and also in his *Philosophie III*, S. 128-236.

¹³ Jørgensen maintains that pantheism is a necessary conclusion of Jaspers’s philosophy on account of its basis in mysticism and negative theology. Cf. Jørgensen, Paul, Henning, op. cit.

thought of the Tathagata-garbha, do not fit so well to the pantheistic immanentism in which the substance-phenomena-scheme is regarded as basic for the explanation of the phenomena of things in the world. In Jaspers's theory, the modes of the encompassing are not derived from the substantial essence of the encompassing which is posited in advance as a metaphysical substance preceding its phenomenal modes. According to Jaspers, the encompassing is not a substance from which modes of the encompassing are derived. The seven modes of the encompassing are so many possible phenomenal horizons in which we experience being itself as the encompassing. Perhaps, we can say that the scheme of explanation in Jaspers's periechontology is inductive (from beneath), while that in the pantheistic immanentism is deductive (from above). In other words, in Jaspers's thought of the encompassing the interdependent interrelations of the finite modes of the encompassing are all that exist, and apart from them, there is nothing else. Here we can recognize a certain parallel between Jaspers's philosophical logic which ascertains the encompassing as the one absolute reality in terms of its inseparable relation with its modes and Wonhyo's essence-function-logic which expounds the relation of the one mind (*nirvana*) and phenomena (*samsara*) in terms of the Tathagata-garbha.

To conclude, Wonhyo's thought of the one mind and Jaspers's metaphysics of the encompassing agree, in that both of them pass beyond the subject-object-scheme of a monotheistic conception of reality and approach closely the substance-phenomena-scheme of pantheistic immanentism in their conception of the absolute as the "immanent transcendence" which manifests itself in the inseparable interpenetration with its phenomenal modes. However, both Wonhyo's one mind philosophy and Jaspers's periechontology, despite their close affinity to the Western pantheistic conception of reality, both of them adopt an essence-function-scheme which does not posit a metaphysical substance as the ground of its phenomena, but grasp the absolute in terms of phenomena and not vice versa. Here in Wonhyo and Jaspers, the relation of reality and phenomena is not that of substance and phenomena, but that of essence and function. In other words, for both, Wonhyo and Jaspers, phenomenon is not regarded as derivable from substance, posited as the ground of phenomena; but phenomenon is regarded as the function of the essential nature of phenomena itself which is grounded in nothing.

Even though the conception of reality in Wonhyo and Jaspers share remarkable common characteristic as we have observed in the above, we cannot overlook the wide difference which separates Wonhyo and Jaspers.

As it has been pointed out already Wonhyo and Jaspers conceive reality in terms of the scheme of understanding which transcends subject-object-split. Nevertheless, in Jaspers's thought the subject-object-scheme is so basic to our thinking that we cannot get out of it even when we are thinking of the reality that

is beyond that scheme, whereas in Wonhyo's thought the dissolution of the objective thinking of the subject-object-schema is a necessary condition for the attainment of enlightenment to the one mind. For Jaspers, the subject-object-scheme is a basic situation of man in thinking, and it is also a necessary condition of our existential self-realization; therefore, for Jaspers, overcoming the subject-object-dichotomy is not only impossible but also undesirable. In other words, Wonhyo speaks about the one mind from beyond the subject-object-scheme in the dimension of non-duality of unio mystica with the one mind, while Jaspers comprehends the encompassing that is beyond the subject-object-scheme within the boundary of subject-object-dichotomy, without any hope of direct encounter with it.

A philosophical dialogue between Wonhyo and Jaspers seems to arrive at deadlock here, since Jaspers neither can, nor wishes to, get out of the subject-object-scheme. However, Jaspers seems to proceed in the direction of the dimension of Wonhyo's one mind in his philosophical struggle to overcome traditional Christian monotheism, as well as Western pantheistic immanentism.

DHARMA-KAYA AND HIDDEN TRANSCENDENCE

In this third point of comparison, religious and soteriological aspects of the metaphysical thought of Wonhyo and Jaspers will be evaluated.

The soteriological character of Wonhyo's one mind metaphysics is more than obvious, since it is nothing but the theoretical means for the communication of the truth of Mahayana Buddhist faith. In other words, Wonhyo's one mind philosophy has the religious aim of guiding non-enlightened sentient beings and to enable them to liberate themselves from ignorance in order to awaken in them unshakable firm faith in the truth of one mind as the source of spiritual freedom and bliss.

Jaspers's philosophy of the encompassing has no direct connection with any specific religious faith, and it rather belongs to the long lineage of the development of history of philosophy in the West. Jaspers expends much effort to make it clear that the origin of philosophy differs from that of religious faith. Nevertheless, it is also true that Jaspers's periechontology is not merely a form of philosophical speculation, but also a theoretical means with the practical aim of helping possible "Existenz" to be liberated from the narrow confinement of objective thinking and to attain the infinitely open horizons of the encompassing which is indispensably required for existential self-realization. Jaspers's so-called "philosophical faith" is nothing else, but life out of the encompassing, and guidance and fulfillment through the encompassing.¹⁴ In this sense, Jaspers is a thinker who spans the region between religion and philosophy, and here lies the religious and soteriological

significance of Jaspers's thought.¹⁵

A common characteristic of both the thought of Wonhyo and Jaspers is the liberation from the bondage of objective thinking through the wisdom of not-knowing (*Nichtwissen*, *docta ignorantia*) is regarded as the indispensable condition to the inner self-realization of freedom for unconditioned actions. In other words, in the thought of Wonhyo and Jaspers, theory and practice, or being and ethics are inseparably united in their mutual interrelation.

In Wonhyo's case, "the purity of wisdom" that sees all things as emptiness transcending all forms and differences is united inseparably with the "suprarational function" of performing the compassionate acts of non-hindrance, benefiting all other beings. Wonhyo describes this relation of the *prajna* wisdom of emptiness and its suprarational functions as follows:

"When we reach from the non-discriminating wisdom which does not differentiate itself and all the sentient beings, and sees them as Suchness, we shall be able to see the formless form of Being, namely, the *Dharma-kaya* of the Buddha, becoming empowered to perform various unthinkable activities and giving light everywhere, moving in one with Suchness (the one mind)."¹⁶

As it is indicated above, in Wonhyo's thought of the one mind the capacity for the practice of compassion is as inseparable from the nondiscriminating *prajna* wisdom; they are like the two sides of one coin.¹⁷ On other words, the non-discriminating wisdom is the inner intellectual side of the suprarational exertion of the capacity for various beneficial actions to others; and conversely, the latter is the mysterious dynamic functioning of the former itself. According to Wonhyo, with the attainment of non-discriminating wisdom that sees all things from the standpoint of suchness, I cease to be myself confined in my individual particularity and become one with suchness; and my world becomes the world of suchness. It is also emphasized in Wonhyo's Mahayana Buddhist faith that in the dimension of the *Samadhi* of suchness all things in the phenomenal world become the appearance of suchness and the function of all things becomes that of suchness.

Through the inner realization of the dimension of the absolute identity with

¹⁴ "Glaube ist das Leben aus dem Umgreifenden, ist die Führung und die Erfüllung durch das Umgreifende." Jaspers, *Der Philosophische Glaube*, München, 1948, S. 20.

¹⁵ Leonhard Ehrlich defines the essential nature of Jaspers's philosophy as a philosophy of faith in his book *Karl Jaspers: Philosophy as Faith*, Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1975.

¹⁶ Wonhyo, *Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, op. cit., p. 120.

¹⁷ To borrow Sung Bae Park's expression, "Wisdom is *t'i* (essence), whereas acts are *yung* (function). In the case of the Buddha, compassionate acts are the external function of his inner wisdom such that the two are indivisible. Park, Sung Bae, op. cit., p. 37.

the one mind, Wonhyo is said to have become “a man of nonhindrance,” who is no longer bound to life and death.” In Wonhyo’s spiritual world of the one mind all the differences and disputes disappear in the harmonious and peaceful co-existence of all things in their non-obstructive mutual interpenetration. From his understanding of ultimate reality as the identical suchness, transcending all the phenomenal differences and limitations, Wonhyo developed his idea of the unification of Buddhism through the harmonization of all the conflicting doctrines of the various schools of Buddhist thought.

In Jaspers’s philosophy also, liberation of man through existential self-realization involves two inseparably united elements; the attainment of the non-objective comprehension of being as the encompassing, and the mysterious empowerment for unconditioned actions of love. Jaspers’s so-called “philosophical basic operation” (philosophische Grundoperation) is a philosophical method of leading the movement of objective thinking to its extreme limit where all thoughts whatsoever fail in front of the un-thinkable being itself. The ultimate end of Jaspers’s “philosophical basic operation” is “knowing of not-knowing” (Wissen des Nichtwissens), *docta ignorantia*, which means the complete failure of objectifying thinking itself. According to Jaspers, it is through this experience of the unknowability of being that our objective consciousness of being breaks through and a new dimension of non-objective awareness of being breaks out. Jaspers maintains that in this non-objective awareness of being, which is open toward the infinite horizon of the encompassing, all things in the world cease to be mere phenomena and acquire new meanings a cipher scripts of being itself. According to Jaspers, the power of love, faith and phantasy, which accompanies the existential “absolute consciousness” as the non-objective consciousness of being, is nothing else but a manifestation of the practical functioning of the non-objective awareness of being, or “fulfilled not-knowing.”

According to Jaspers, the non-objective consciousness of being liberates man from the narrow confinement of limited objective knowledge, as well as from the inauthentic self-understanding which is based on objective knowledge.¹⁸ Therefore, Jaspers’s philosophy of the encompassing is not only a philosophy of being, but also a philosophy of liberation because it causes in man transformed awareness of being, accompanied by transformed self-awareness.

Jaspers’s so-called non-objective existential self-understanding, which is attained through a leap from objective to non-objective awareness of being as the encompassing, seems to approach very closely to the Buddhist consciousness of no-self (*anatman*) in Wonhyo’s thought in which the self is seen as non-objective, non-substantial emptiness that transcends all thoughts. Furthermore, Jaspers’s

¹⁸ Jaspers, *Von der Wahrheit*, München, 1947, S. 39, 44.

concept of the unconditioned acts of love shows a very close similarity to Wonhyo's notion of non-obstructive acts of compassion, which flow out in a mysterious way from the non-discriminating wisdom of the enlightened, who sees differences without clinging to them, and sees forms of things without being bound to them. In Jaspers's philosophy, love is conceived as the authentic existential attitude towards others that lets others be what they are in themselves. Furthermore, Jaspers maintains that love is the brightest and more open, yet at the same time the darkest origin of free actions. According to him, love is a mystery which is infinite, unplanable, unknowable, and uncontrollable.¹⁹ Jaspers's description of love as the mysterious depth of the existential absolute consciousness is not so different from Wonhyo's notion of the mysterious suprarational dimension of Buddhist compassion.

However, despite notable similarities between Wonhyo's notion of non-obstructive acts of compassion and Jaspers's notion of unconditioned act of love, we cannot overlook the essential differences between them.

In Jaspers's philosophy, the *unio mystica* with being itself, which is the ultimate end of Wonhyo's Buddhism, is impossible, because the non-identity (or absolute difference) of man and God is an unchangeable basic principle of Jaspers's thought as a whole. Therefore, the movement of Jaspers's existential reason towards the transcendence is suspended in the unceasing process of ascending, and arrives at the indirect ascertainment of unthinkable transcendence through the awareness of its own limitation, while Wonhyo's Buddhist "Existenz" proceeds towards the realization of the Dharmakaya, the all pervading essence-body of the one mind of suchness. In other words, in Jaspers's thought transcendence is the absolute other, even to the possible "Existenz." In Jaspers's philosophical faith, "Existenz" does not know God directly, but knows God only indirectly through ciphers of God.

Although Jaspers was deeply interested in oriental philosophies, especially in Buddhist mysticism in which he seems to have found an excellent solution to the problem of overcoming subject-object-dichotomy which stands in the way of our search of being, Jaspers could or would never adopt the way of *unio mystica*, and held on to his way of the infinitely unceasing process of coming close to being.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., S. 991.

²⁰ To quote Jaspers: "Es ist genug, daß, Sein ist. Zwar Wissen von der Gottheit wird Aberglaube; aber Wahrheit ist, wo scheiternde Existenz die vieldeutige Sprache der Transzendenz in die einfältigste Seinsgewissheit zu übersetzen vermag." Jaspers, *Philosophie III*, S. 236. "Nur im deutlichen, gegenständlichen Wissen kann unser Bewußsein hell bleiben. Nur in ihm kann es im Erfahren seiner Grenzen durch das, was an der Grenze fühlbar ist, seinen Gehalt empfangen. Im Darüber-hinaus-Denken bleiben wir immer zugleich darin." *Einführung in die Philosophie*, S. 35. "Wenn ich sterbe:ich bin mit nichts Wesentlichem fertig, ich bleibe immer im 'noch nicht'. Aber Liebe ist das schon erfüllende Zwischensein. Liebe ist die einzige Garantie des Seins. Sie ist das Innwerden der Ewigkeit in der doch nicht aufgehörenden Zeitlichkeit.?" *Von der Wahrheit*, S. 1013. A Japanese

What characterizes Jaspers's thought is not the repose in the unio mystica or the peace of the fulfilled being, but the unconditioned faith in the being of transcendence, and the uncertain and strenuous tension of the will in front of the hidden transcendence. Here we find one of the unique characteristics of Jaspers's thought which is quite different from the thought of Wonhyo, who sings and dances with freedom of non-obstruction, playing with joy and in peace in the realm of unio mystica of Mahayana Buddhist enlightenment.

Jaspers's philosophical faith, which stays in indirect contact with being through the mediation of ambiguous ciphers of transcendence, can offer neither the peace of mind, nor the rest of being, but only the unhealable consciousness of separation, coupled with the infinite tension of the will in front of the hidden transcendence. Seen from the standpoint of Wonhyo's Mahayana Buddhism, Jaspers's philosophical faith would appear as a sign of one of the many limitations of Western philosophy which is not able to offer the perfection of wisdom. However, Jaspers would still maintain that we cannot but stay at the boundary of incomplete wisdom to keep secure the responsible self-consciousness of individual human beings.

Wonhyo's doctrine of absolutely non-obstructive actions of compassion and Jaspers's notion of unconditioned love are in their own ways precious sources of wisdom for us living in the contemporary world with the common task of constructing together the ethic of universal and unbiased love that is demanded by our age of the global village.

CONCLUSION

We have compared Wonhyo's Mahayana Buddhist philosophy of the one mind and

scholar, Tamaki, criticizes Jaspers's "indirect" approach to God, raising a question: "Is it not true even his transcending thinking, which tries to transcend infinitely beyond subject-object-split, could not raise in him certainty of Nirvana?" However, it seems to me that Jaspers does not want to have any doubt about the truth of oriental mystic experiences. Simply, he does not want to follow that path. Tamaki, Koshiro, "Jaspers and Buddhism: a Postscript to Japanese Translation of Jaspers's *Buddha and Nagarjuna*", pp. 195-205. – Alan Olson defines Jaspers's mysticism as a speculative mysticism, emphasizing its intermediate nature. Alan Olson, Jaspers' *Critique of Mysticism*, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* U/Z (June 1973), p. 252. – Sebastian Samay explains the "indirectness" of Jaspers's being-experience as below: "He is not a mock mystic. He simply wants to mobilize thought into a kind of thinking that no longer clings absolutely to the fixity of objective knowledge. Between a direct intuition of Being, which would be a kind of mystical experience, and an objective grasp of it, which would not be the grasp of Being at all, he believes in an indirect intuition of Being by means of object." Sebastian Samay, *Reason Revisited, the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*, Univ. of Notre Dame Press., 1971, p. 58.

Jaspers's existential philosophy of the encompassing (das Umgreifende).

Wonhyo's philosophy of the one mind and Jaspers's periechontology exhibit common features in the following respects:

First, in both, the ultimate reality is conceived as the absolute transcendence, which is unthinkable and unspeakable within the framework of our ordinary thinking, which is confined in the subject-object-scheme.

Second, Wonhyo's one mind and Jaspers's encompassing are not conceived as absolutely transcendent from the immanent worldly phenomena. That is, Wonhyo as well as Jaspers conceive the absolute reality not only as transcendent but also as immanent. Wonhyo and Jaspers maintain that the absolute reality is immanent transcendence, which is inseparable from the worldly phenomena of individual beings. Therefore, Wonhyo and Jaspers emphasize the great significance of the phenomenal world as the indispensable media of the understanding the absolute reality.

Third, for both Wonhyo and Jaspers the philosophical search of being is not just a matter of theoretical interest. Wonhyo and Jaspers emphasize the practical significance of the truth of being for the realization of human spiritual freedom.

However, in spite of the prominent common features in their thoughts, we cannot neglect the basic differences between Wonhyo and Jaspers in their conceptions of reality. Wonhyo, from the background of Mahayana Buddhism, tends to conceive reality in a completely non-dual consciousness, while Jaspers, from the Christian West, chooses to remain at the limit of the dualistic consciousness of subject-object-dichotomy. While Wonhyo sees the ultimate perfection of human freedom in the achievement of mystical union with the reality itself beyond the subject-object-split, Jaspers maintains that for the achievement of genuine freedom of the self-realizing individual human "Existenz" it is necessary to retain the indirectness of the contact with reality as the hidden transcendence.

The contributions Wonhyo and Jaspers make, in their conceptions of the reality as being beyond all thoughts, is to free us from dogmatic fixations and narrow-minded exclusivism of blind self-assertion, inviting us to infinitely open vistas of encompassing reality. Furthermore, Wonhyo and Jaspers teach us how to reach the ultimate reality as absolute transcendence without leaving or neglecting the phenomenal world in which we live. Thirdly, Wonhyo's one mind and Jaspers's encompassing help us overcome our limited object bound consciousness of being, and enable us to accept viewpoints of others with unconditioned recognition in the communication of the loving strife (*liebende Kampf*).

Wonhyo's oriental wisdom of non-hindrance contains a great insight for overcoming the limitation of the western way of thinking which Jaspers is sharply conscious of, but cannot overcome. On the other hand, Jaspers's thought of the encompassing contains a great wisdom which can fill up the lack of thoroughgoing

reality-consciousness that we notice in the oriental mystical spirituality. The existentialistic framework of Jaspers's philosophy of being, especially, can be a great help in strengthening the responsible individual self-consciousness which tends to be neglected in the mystical framework of oriental thought. For this reason, continuing a mutually supplementing and mutually transforming philosophical dialogue between the West and the East remains a worthy endeavor.