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저자 (Authors)	An Ok-Sun
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The Fundamental Ideas of Human Rights in the Thought of Wonhyo

An Ok-Sun

Abstract

This paper examines the ideals of human rights in Wonhyo's thought. It interprets Wonhyo's concepts of ilsim and muae in terms of the three fundamental ideals of human rights: liberty, equality and brotherhood.

Through an analysis of "returning to the source of ilsim" (gwiil-simwon), this paper shows that ilsim finally aims at leading people to realize non-duality of others and self, and to live a life of a great compassion of oneness (dongchejabi). Through analyzing a womb of Buddha-nature (yeoraejang), another name of ilsim, this paper argues that it is the ground of the absolute equality of humans. This is because it is undestructible in any situations for any person.

Through analyzing the notion of muae, this paper argues that it is an embodiment of compassion and liberty. Muae means liberty not bound by any bi-functional oppositions and fixed conventional thoughts. However, it is not just about liberty. What is prior to liberty is compassion. So liberty and compassion are inseparable in muae. One cannot think of one of them without the other. Wonhyo's this notion of liberty is different from the modern notion of liberty. Mainly because it is not based on atomic and possessive individualism. It is rooted in oneness of you and I.

Keywords: Buddhist human rights, liberty, equality, compassion, *muae*, *ilsim*, *hwajaeng*, Wonhyo, *yoikjungaeng*, *singman-gyeong*

An Ok-Sun (An, Ok-seon) is Research Professor at the Institute of Humanities at Chonnam National University. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1995. She has authored several books including *Compassion and Benevolence* (1996) and *A Modern Understanding of Buddhist Ethics* (2002). E-mail: visudhi@hanmail.net.

Introduction

Wonhyo (617–686) is one of the most renowned among Korean Buddhist monks. He is highly valued as a creative thinker due to his demonstration of a unique perspective in his understanding of Buddhism. Not only a master of Buddhism, Wonhyo was well versed in both Confucianism and Daoism as well. Furthermore, he is famous for his open life, not bound by the thought and customs of others. Although he is acknowledged to have broken Buddhist precepts, Wonhyo is held in high esteem in Korea as this breaking of precept is understood as having arisen within the context of *muae*, the search for a life of liberty and compassion.

As a Buddhist thinker, Wonhyo established a creative and practical thought system by synthesizing and reconciling Buddhist doctrines that appeared to be contradictory. And as a practitioner of Buddhism, Wonhyo lived in accordance with his thought. His philosophical creativity, intellectual accessibility, and depth influenced Chinese Buddhism, and his life of practice is kept alive in popular Korean stories. His thought and life are a paradigmatic model in the Korean Buddhist tradition.

Wonhyo's distinguished scholastic and monastic life has garnered much attention from Korean Buddhist scholars. There are many studies on both his thought and his life. New approaches have recently appeared that reinterpret these from modern perspectives, such as pluralism. Following this trend, I approach his thought and life from a perspective concerned with human rights. In this paper, I attempt to reveal and clarify his fundamental ideals of human rights by examining the core concepts in both his thought and actions.

“Human rights,” here understood as “rights that fundamentally belong to all persons simply due to their humanity,” have changed in definition throughout history and also between cultures. The modern concept of human rights arose with the emergence of modern states and the development of capitalism; the major characteristics of this modern conceptualization are legal and political. As legal and political rights were achieved, social and economic rights became empha-

sized. In this way the foundations of these varying interpretations of the rights of human beings have evolved in accordance with the nature of the respective time period and cultural/social context. However, the fundamental ideals of human rights remain the same.

What then are the fundamental ideals of human rights? I take them to be liberty, equality and brotherhood, as articulated in the modern era and later firmly established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first article of the Declaration states, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” Based on this ideal of liberty and equality, specific rights were defined in the subsequent articles. However, brotherhood is neither mentioned nor emphasized in the later articles, perhaps because it cannot be claimed as an individual right. Although brotherhood is not a right, but rather a virtuous duty, it is necessary in the pursuit of human rights that individuality and exclusivity, which are the negative aspects of the modern concept of human rights, are complemented by brotherhood. The three fundamental ideals of liberty, equality, and brotherhood are all equally important.

Interpreting the core aspects of Wonhyo’s thought and life from the perspective of these three fundamental ideals, draws attention to Wonhyo’s three concepts—*ilsim*, *hwajaeng*, and *muae*. These can be understood in relation to the three fundamental ideals of human rights. With a focus on *ilsim* and *muae*, in this paper I demonstrate that *ilsim* requires compassion/brotherhood, and by interpreting *ilsim* as the repository of Buddha-nature, I show that it is also the basis of equality. I then explore the ideal of compassion and liberty by examining the notion of *muae*. In this examination of *ilsim* and *muae*, I argue that the three fundamental ideals of human rights are present in Wonhyo’s thought as liberty, equality, and compassion.

Wonhyo's Three Central Concepts: *Ilsim*, *Hwajaeng*, and *Muae*

The representative concepts of the thought and life of Wonhyo are *ilsim*, *hwajaeng*, and *muae*. Although it is difficult to define these three concepts, I shall attempt to do so. *Ilsim*, literally “one-mind,” is an inclusive concept explaining all beings and their interconnection in a single system. *Ilsim* indicates both human subjectivity of mind and the world that is reflected through it. *Hwajaeng*, the “reconciliation of disputes,” is a method to reconcile different views. *Muae*, “not being bound,” indicates a state and act of liberty not bound by any fixed thought or convention.

Ilsim, *hwajaeng*, and *muae* are interconnected. *Ilsim*, which is representative of the total system of Wonhyo's thought, is the foundation of *hwajaeng* and *muae*. *Hwajaeng*, as a philosophical method and the practice of *ilsim*, is an expression of *muae*. While *muae*, based on *ilsim*, is in some ways a specific act of *hwajaeng*, *ilsim* requires *hwajaeng* and *muae*. *Hwajaeng* as a consequence of *ilsim* is a precondition of *muae*, and *muae* is the embodiment of *ilsim* and *hwajaeng*.

In relation to *ilsim*, *hwajaeng* is not only a requirement of *ilsim* but also a method of representing *ilsim*. In relation to *muae*, however, *hwajaeng* is not only a requirement of *muae* but also a method of realizing *muae*. Thus, *hwajaeng* is not just a philosophical method; as an ethical act, it is also a practice of *ilsim* and *muae*.

The higher concept that connects *ilsim*, *hwajaeng*, and *muae* is compassion. *Ilsim*, requiring compassion, is meaningless if it does not bring compassion. *Hwajaeng* presupposes compassion, and it itself is an expression of compassion especially as a philosophical method to reconcile doctrinal disputes. *Hwajaeng* accepts the significance of human beings unconditionally and leads them to take the right path due to compassion. Finally, *muae* can be justified as an example of Buddhist liberty achieved only through compassion, and furthermore the acts of *muae* are compassionate actions.

***Ilsim* Requires Compassion**

Ilsim requires compassion and provides a basis for equality. According to Wonhyo, *ilsim*'s entire significance is compassion. *Ilsim* is addressed in order to evoke compassion from within us, forms the foundation of human equality as all human beings are equal because they are endowed with *ilsim*, the "repository of Buddha-nature."

Wonhyo clearly addresses *ilsim* as essential to all Buddhist *dharma*, indicating that the meaning of *Daeseunggisillon* (Wakening Faith in Mahāyāna) and *Geumgang sammae gyeongnon* (Vajra-samadhi-sūtra-śāstra) is to return to the source of *ilsim* (*gwilsimwon*). By nature, everything exists in *ilsim*, including human kind, but this has been forgotten and we need to return to the source of *ilsim*.

In order to be able to return to the source of *ilsim*, we must be knowledgeable about the mechanisms of *ilsim*. *Ilsim*'s function is explained by two gates: the gate of mind-suchness that opens to mind-suchness (*simjinyeo*) and the gate of arising-ceasing (*saengmye-olmun*) which opens to mind-arising-ceasing (*simsaengmyeol*). Unenlightened beings, possessing a pure mind (*cheongjeongsim*) by nature, exist within the function of the mind-suchness of *ilsim*, but they are also presently under the function of mind-arising-ceasing within *ilsim*, which is called the repository of Buddha-nature. Although they are under the function of mind-arising-ceasing, they are not disconnected from mind-suchness as the two minds are not separable just as the two gates are not separable.

When Wonhyo commented that "the gate of mind-suchness and of mind-arising-ceasing each include all *dharma*, so the two gates are not separate," he made clear the relationship between *ilsim* and the repository of Buddha-nature. "All *dharma* has no arising-ceasing and is completely calm (*jeokjeong*). What exists is only *ilsim*. We call this mind-suchness. Thus 'complete cessation' is *ilsim*. Although the essence of this *ilsim* is 'enlightened by its very nature' (*bon-gak*), it continues the transmigration of arising and ceasing due to ignorance (*mumyeong*). We call this the real Buddha-nature hidden behind this gate of arising-ceasing." Notice here that the last sentence indicates

the repository of Buddha-nature.

As we see here, Wonhyo explained the repository of Buddha-nature by the gate of arising-ceasing of *ilsim*. As the mind of arising-ceasing includes enlightenment (*gak*) and non-enlightenment (*bulgak*) and the gate of arising-ceasing is not separate from the gate of suchness, so a repository of Buddha-nature having the characteristic of mind-arising-ceasing has also the characteristic of mind-suchness. When mind-arising-ceasing is dominant, the mind is called a repository of Buddha-nature. When mind-suchness is dominant, the mind is called *ilsim*. When unenlightened beings forget (the true nature of) *ilsim* due to ignorance and the continuation of the transmigration cycle under its influence, we call *ilsim* a repository of Buddha-nature. In this case, *ilsim* does not function. It is lost. So it is necessary for unenlightened beings, who are repositories of Buddha-nature, to return to the source of *ilsim*, and come under the influence of mind-suchness.

We can express the act of returning “to the source of *ilsim*” in various ways. For example, it can be seen as recovering mind-suchness, which is hidden in the repository of Buddha-nature, transforming the repository of Buddha-nature into *ilsim*, destroying ignorance, or returning to the source of *ilsim*. Wonhyo often referred to this as “returning to the source of *ilsim*.” Here, an important point is that once *ilsim* returns to its source and functions as absolutely calm mind-suchness, it does not leave mind-arising-ceasing. As we have seen, the gates of suchness and of arising-ceasing are not separable.

Wonhyo explained the inseparability of the two gates, meaning that all beings have the two gates within, as follows. Each gate includes the other. As the gate of suchness contains defilement and purity as a whole (*yeomjeongtongsang*), so it contains all *dharma* of defilement and purity. The gate of arising-ceasing presents defilement and purity separately, yet it contains all *dharma* of defilement and purity. Although “containing as a whole” and “containing separately” are different, neither can be abandoned (*jemusogyeon*).

As the gates of suchness and of arising-ceasing, the two aspects of *ilsim*, contain each other, so both unenlightened beings and bud-

dhas have these two gates. The only difference between them is that. Unenlightened beings presently remain in the gate of arising-ceasing and do not leave the gate of suchness, while buddhas remain in the gate of suchness and do not leave the gate of arising-ceasing. Unenlightened beings and buddhas always keep a channel to communicate with each other through the two gates. They never exclude each other. This lets *nirvāṇa* (enlightenment) and *saṃsāra* (transmigration cycle) communicate with each other. This relationship between the two gates opens this channel for unenlightened beings and buddhas to communicate. Here *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are not different from each other although they are not the same. The same is true for unenlightened beings and buddhas.

Then, what is an unenlightened being supposed to do in order to return to the source of *ilsim*? One answer is “to relinquish all objects of the external world” (*singman-gyeong*). Wonhyo answers this question as “to relinquish objects everlastingly and to return to the source of *ilsim*.” In order to understand what “to relinquish objects” means, we should first look at how objects arise.

A standard explanation for the arising of objects is as follows. When the original pure mind raises a discerned mind (*bunbyeolsim*) due to beginningless ignorance, objects arise. Just as the wind raises the waves on the ocean, the mind reacts on objects due to ignorance and the four characteristics of rising-staying-changing-ceasing (*sasang*) or objects (the external world, *gyeong*) arise. Although objects arise due to ignorance in the present mind, the activity of ignorance, and thus objects can also cease because the mind is pure by nature.” There are no other objects in the mind of the unenlightened because the mind is bright by nature and there are no defilements. . . . If falsity (*mang*) in the mind disappears, soon other objects also disappear because objects appear through a change in the false mind (*mangsim*.)” In other words, “the arising of objects” is caused by the false mind, and the activity of the false mind is caused by the activity of an ignorant mind. This whole process is based on the ignorance of the emptiness of objects when the mind contacts such objects. The false mind is thus bound by objects. In this process, unenlightened

beings cannot realize an emptiness of mind.

From the perspective of Buddhism, there is no “before-after” between the mind and objects. The mind and objects arise dependent on one another. “If the mind does not raise objects, objects do not raise the mind” (*simbulsaeenggyeong, gyeongbulsaeengsim*). In other words, the mind and objects arise dependent on one another. Both are empty. If one of them ceases, so does the other. If one recognizes the nature of the mind and objects to be emptiness, then they cannot arise.

To see independence or emptiness of the mind and objects simultaneously means to know their non-duality epistemologically as well as ontologically. Finally, this requires us to live with the perception that neither the mind and objects, nor I and you are dual. So “to relinquish objects” ultimately means to overcome the duality based on the I-centered mind, and live in oneness with all beings. Here a great compassion of oneness (*dongchedaebi*), the heart of Buddhism, is obtained.

From this understanding, we can say that to relinquish objects or to return to the source of *ilsim* is nothing other than to live in oneness, namely, to live a compassionate life of oneness. This is why Wonhyo clearly identified the reason for establishing the *dharma* of *ilsim* (*ilsimbeop*) as “a great compassion of oneness.” This aspect of Wonhyo’s thought is clarified by his appeal to “let unenlightened beings relinquish their doubts and attachments, and consequently gain faith and realize their Buddha-nature.”

To doubt *dharma* means to doubt in this way. Is the essence of the *dharma* of Mahāyāna the one or the many? If it is one, there is no other *dharma* and so there are no unenlightened beings. So for whom does a *bodhisattva* make a great vow? If the *dharma* is many, it is not one. So I and others are separated. If one has such a doubt, then one cannot have the great compassion of oneness. For the *dharma* of Mahāyāna, we establish the *dharma* of *ilsim* in order to rid ourselves of this doubt. Thus in the *dharma* of Mahāyāna there is only the *dharma* of *ilsim* and there is no other *dharma*.”

It cannot be said that the essence of the *dharma* of Mahāyāna is one. Neither can we say that it is many, for then we cannot generate a great compassion of oneness. So we can only establish the *dharma* of *ilsim* in order to generate the great compassion of oneness. Wonhyo finds the reason for establishing the *dharma* of *ilsim* in this way. Thus, *ilsim* can neither be established nor have meaning when it leaves a great compassion of oneness. This understanding is creative and yet emphasizes the essential teaching of the Buddha as compassion.

Wonhyo's understanding that the only reason for establishing the *dharma* of *ilsim* is to let unenlightened beings generate the great compassion of oneness, is reflected in his commentary on the two gates. He thought that the doctrine of the two gates was for the purpose of abandoning any doubt about the *dharma* of *ilsim*, of generating great compassion of oneness, and having people practice *samatha* (concentration meditation, *ji*) and *vipaśyanā* (insight meditation, *gwan*). Furthermore, he thought that the gate of suchness related to the practice of *samatha*, which is to cease the existence of objects and that the gate of rising-ceasing to the practice of *vipaśyanā*, which is to see the reality of arising and ceasing.

The heart of practicing *samatha* is to know "one characteristic of *dharma dhātu*" (*beopgyeilsang*). This means to obtain the *samatha* of suchness and of the everyday. It means to know that all buddha-bodies (*beopsin*) are equal to all unenlightened beings, or that they are not dual. In belief, the essence of practicing *samatha* is to perceive the oneness of all beings. But, according to the *Wakening Faith in Mahāyāna*, if one practices only this *samatha*, one leaves *vipaśyanā*. So one needs to practice *vipaśyanā* to see the suffering of unenlightened beings. In the practice of *vipaśyanā*, one makes a vow to save them from their suffering:

Let my mind leave discernments. Let me do good things in all directions to save all beings from their suffering through infinite skill-in-means. And finally let them have the supreme happiness of *nirvāṇa*."

Samatha brings an awareness of the oneness of all beings while *vipāśyanā* establishes the vow of a *bodhisattva*. *Samatha* is awareness of reality while *vipāśyanā* is a vow for compassion for unenlightened beings. Practicing both is related to the two gates in Wonhyo's thought. *Samatha* is related to the gate of suchness and *vipāśyanā* to the gate of arising-ceasing. As the two gates are inseparable, *samatha* and *vipāśyanā* are inseparable. Wonhyo compared the practice of *samatha* and *vipāśyanā* to the two wings of a bird or the two wheels of a vehicle. He equally emphasized these two methods of practice.

In brief, an existence consisting of the two gates, requires compassion. Through practicing *samatha* and *vipāśyanā* related to the two gates, one should practice the great compassion of oneness. Thus everyone is capable of practicing a great compassion of oneness through *samatha* and *vipāśyanā*, and finally of returning to the source of *ilsim*. Although unenlightened beings transmigrate through six realms due to ignorance, they are not leaving the ocean of *ilsim*. That is why they can generate the great compassion of oneness.

Here, as we have seen above, "to return to the source of *ilsim*," or "to relinquish objects" is the perception of oneness/non-duality and the enactment of a life of compassion. In other words, the sole meaning of *ilsim* is the great compassion of oneness. So it was natural for Wonhyo to find not only the reason for establishing the *dharma* of *ilsim* but also the reason for practicing *samatha* and *vipāśyanā* only in compassion. What *ilsim* pursues and requires is the great compassion of oneness.

***Il*sim as the Basis of Equality**

*Il*sim provides us with the basis for equality. It also explains why we as human beings are equal. Wonhyo considered all human beings to be absolutely equal in this way, on the basis of *ilsim*, also called the repository of Buddha-nature (*tathāgatagarbha*).

It is important to note that *ilsim* is called the repository of Buddha-nature when it is the basis of human equality. A "repository of

Buddha-nature” means the seed or the possibility of becoming a Buddha, wherein “possibility” means the possibility of transforming *saṃsāra* into *nirvāṇa* or of transforming a self-centered life into an egoless existence. It is about the moral capability of following the path of the Buddha. As a seed is transformed into a fruit or a tree through conditions such as water and light, unenlightened people transform themselves into buddhas through the conditions produced through the practice of instructions such as the eight noble paths, *samatha* and *vipāśyanā*, or the six *pāramitās*. This moral capability always remains the same regardless of distinctions such as sex, age or culture. It remains constant no matter how situations change and whatever individuals undergo. So we say “possibility” because it is to be realized eventually.

To have a repository of Buddha-nature means that we can have the same enlightenment as achieved by the Buddha and that we cannot avoid this supreme goal of life because it is our nature. Wonhyo asserted that “the way of *bodhi* (enlightenment) is an equal truth. It is not an unequal truth” as follows.

The *bodhi* of the Buddha, so pure by nature, is pervasive and great. So it is called the “Way.” All sentient beings have this nature and there is no one who can abandon it. Thus, it is said “an equal truth and not an unequal truth.”

As we see here, Wonhyo had a firm belief in human beings as shown in his view of Buddha-nature. He introduced six arguments concerning Buddha-nature.

- 1) All beings have a Buddha-nature in the sense that there is a future possibility for them to recover it although presently they are disconnected from their innate good nature.
- 2) Currently unenlightened people become the essential part (*bonche*) of Buddha-nature.
- 3) The mind of unenlightened beings becomes the essential part of enlightenment, because it is their nature to dislike suffering and to seek happiness and, by practicing this, to finally reach the

bliss of the supreme *bodhi*.

- 4) In the mind, it is our nature not to lose the spirituality that becomes an essential part of enlightenment.
- 5) The seed that exists in *alaya-vijñāna* becomes the essential part of Buddha-nature by nature.
- 6) *Amala-vijñāna* (fundamental pure consciousness) that knows suchness becomes the essential part of Buddha-nature.

Wonhyo thought that unenlightened beings could attain their buddhahood through their present universal mind (2), the mind that avoids suffering and pursues happiness (3). This mind, as a seed that exists in *alaya-vijñāna*, is the essential part of Buddha-nature by its character (5), and having a nature of knowing suchness, it is the essential part of Buddha-nature from the perspective of *amala-vijñāna* (6). Although one's good nature can be disjointed and it may not seem as if one is capable of being a buddha, Buddha-nature cannot be lost because it exists in a future state (1). In other words, a mind never loses its spirituality, and this spirituality becomes the spirituality of enlightenment.

The most important point is that even an evil person cannot destroy the repository of Buddha-nature. The indestructibility of the Buddha-nature provides us with absolute human equality. We are absolutely equal because the repository of Buddha-nature as "a possibility of realizing the supreme value" never disappears. We are equal due to the possibility of perfection through moral transformation.

When this notion of equality is applied to all human beings, to both buddhas and unenlightened beings, its uniqueness is evident. We can say buddhas and unenlightened beings are equal, but they are not the same. They are both the same and different. In other words, the "being equal" between buddhas and unenlightened beings includes both the sameness and difference between them.

Unenlightened beings and buddhas are the same in the sense that both of them have a repository of Buddha-nature, but differ in the sense that buddhas have "realized" it while unenlightened beings have only the "potential." So we can say that both are the same and different by the same token, namely, "the repository of Buddha-

nature.” Regarding the difference between buddhas and unenlightened beings, Wonhyo stated that unenlightened beings have “essential enlightenment” (*bon-gak*) but have not reached their own enlightenment due to “the thorn of selfish desire,” or “externally obtained defilement” (*gaekjin*). On the other hand, buddhas and unenlightened beings are both enlightened by nature and are always in “one enlightenment” (*ilgak*). Regarding this sameness and difference, we can say that unenlightened beings and the Buddha-nature are neither the same nor different (*jungsaengbulseong burilburi*). A difference is assumed between them when we refer to their sameness, while we assume that there is sameness when we refer to their difference.

This nature of sameness and difference is doctrinally grounded in the nature of the two gates of *ilsim*, particularly, the nature of “inclusiveness” including all *dharma* (*chongseopseong*) and the “inseparability” (*bulsangriseong*) of the two gates.

Recall that *ilsim* has a dual meaning. It is both the pure mind (*jeongsim*) and the defiled mind (*yeomsim*). The pure mind is the characteristic of the gate of suchness and the defiled mind is that of rising-ceasing. The gate of suchness is mainly characterized as “being-pure” and yet it does not leave “being-defiled” (*bulyeomiyeom*) while the gate of rising and ceasing is mainly characterized as “being-defiled” and yet it does not leave “being-pure” (*yeomibulyeom*). Here the characteristics of *ilsim*, “the compatibility of being-defiled and being-pure,” is not possible if the two gates are neither “inclusive” nor “inseparable.”

Again, we see the sameness and difference between the buddhas and unenlightened beings due to the inclusiveness and inseparability of the two gates. Although the mind of an unenlightened being takes the mind of arising-ceasing as its primary characteristic, it does not leave the mind of suchness. This is why she/he is not defiled and yet defiled. Although the mind of the buddha takes the mind of suchness as its nature, he/she does not leave the mind of arising-ceasing and purposely transmigrates between the six realms out of compassion. This is why he/she is defiled and yet not defiled. This coexistence in

the mind of not-being-defiled and being-defiled, or the mind of buddhas and the mind of unenlightened beings is based on the inclusiveness and inseparability of the two gates indicating these two aspects of the mind.

The sameness and difference of buddhas and unenlightened beings based on the inclusiveness and the inseparability of the two gates, is illustrated by a famous aphorism. Due to ignorance without beginning, Buddha-nature is hidden. This is similar to the wave that arises from the calm ocean due to the wind, where the ocean is Buddha-nature and the wave is ignorance. The Buddha-nature, the pure mind, loses its natural calmness due to ignorance. When the wind of ignorance blows, the waves of the defiled mind arise on the ocean of the pure mind. But this state is not the state of the pure mind being lost but that of the pure mind pausing. The state of the pure mind, a calm state by nature, is recovered when the wave of the defiled mind or the wind of ignorance stops. "The fact that self-nature is pure by nature but that there is a defiled mind due to ignorance makes this clear; it is pure but always defiled. The fact that there is a defiled mind but self-nature never changes makes this clear; it is moving but always calm." In this simile, the water or the suchness of the ocean is the sameness of buddhas and unenlightened beings, and presence or absence of the wind of ignorance is the difference between them. In other words, the original purity of the repository of Buddha-nature is their sameness, and the concealment or manifestation of it is their difference.

Although equality in the repository of Buddha-nature assumes sameness and difference between buddhas and unenlightened beings, the emphasis remains on their sameness because the significance of a repository of Buddha-nature is not the difference but sameness. In other words, its significance is the firm belief that unenlightened beings can transform their minds into the mind of a buddha, or the belief that unenlightened beings are already buddhas. This view of equality emphasizing sameness rather than difference is founded on the absolute belief that no single person can avoid the path to the goal and that all beings without exception will eventually reach this

path. That is why we can neither abandon nor discriminate against any person.

***Muae* as Liberty and Compassion**

In a word, the life of Wonhyo can be called a life of *muae*, which literally means “not being bound.” *Muae* is the completion of his thought. Through *muae* he realized fully his philosophy, resolving all oppositions and realizing reconciliation out of compassion. *Muae* comes from compassion and realizes liberty.

The *muae* life as lived by Wonhyo has been highlighted from the perspective of liberty unbound, but *muae* is more than this. If we understand it as no more than liberty, we leave out its essence, namely, compassion. In *muae*, compassion is prior to liberty. Its identity cannot be maintained without compassion. *Muae* without compassion is not liberty but license.

The records referring to Wonhyo’s enactment of *muae* through his life are *Songgoseungjeon* (The Biographies of the Great Monks of Song.) and *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms). According to the former, Wonhyo lived a life of not being bound through the distinction between layperson and monk. It is said that his actions were not predictable. He practiced meditation and gave sermons. He also drank, played a musical instrument, and spent time with laypeople. The scope of his life lay somewhere between the life of a monk and that of a layperson. According to *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*, there are two songs that demonstrate the *muae* quality of his life: one about an ax without a handle, and the “*Muaega*” (Song of *Muae*).

Before his breaking of a precept, it is said that Wonhyo sang; “I will make a pillar to hold the heavens if someone gives me an ax without a handle.” The king noticed that Wonhyo was looking for a widow and sent a messenger to invite him to the palace. He introduced Wonhyo to his widowed daughter, and consequently, Wonhyo became a father. His son Seolchong grew up to become a famous

scholar. For Wonhyo it was the breaking of a precept, but he appears to have maintained his respect even through this period. Breaking a precept is considered to have been a turning point for him as he took on the life of a *bodhisattva*. At any rate, he disrobed and called himself an “ill-natured layperson” (*soseonggeosa*). In this way, he started the life of *muae* living with and among people.

Wonhyo’s disregard for conventional distinctions is apparent in this life of *muae* which began with the song of an ax without a handle. He intentionally chose that action. He broke a precept publicly and spoke openly about it. It is worth noting that his breaking of a precept was goal-oriented toward the aim of making a pillar to hold up the heavens. Here, we see his good intentions and honesty. The series of actions related to the song of an ax have been commonly interpreted as Wonhyo’s efforts to resolve his conflict or suffering over social status/position. If we see his actions in this way, his breaking a precept was not for the fulfillment of his personal desire; rather, it was the vow of a *bodhisattva*. He lived in accordance with what he wrote; an enlightened being should not stay in *nirvāṇa* out of compassion. His intentions and life as told by the song of the ax were for the benefit of others.

Another song illuminating Wonhyo’s *muae*, the “Song of *Muae*,” not only reveals the philosophical foundation of *muae* but also specifies his actions of *muae*. After carving a Buddhist tool imitating the gourd of a clown, he started to sing “One who is not bound (*muae*) by any thing goes beyond life and death through the one way (*ildo*).” This song, quoted from the *Huayen Sūtra* reveals both his thought and his life as a *bodhisattva*.

The “one way,” leading us beyond life and death, appears to have the same meaning as the Buddhist *dharma*, one *dharma*, one *dharma kāya*, or *ilsim* in the *Huayen Sūtra*. The term “one way” appears together with one gate, one mind, one thought, one truth, one action, one *yāna*, one enlightenment, and one taste in other texts. Although this “one way,” as a method to reach to enlightenment, can be called various things, it is the same as *ilsim*. Through the “Song of *Muae*,” Wonhyo showed people where they should

return to. Furthermore, he showed what “returning to the source of *ilsim*” means a life of great compassion or “benefiting people” (*yoikjungsaeng*).

The actions of *muae* connected with these two songs show Wonhyo’s life of compassion and liberty. As seen earlier, according to *ilsim* and the two gates, one who reaches *nirvāṇa* of the gate of suchness willingly chooses the world of transmigration (*saṃsāra* or life-and-death) of the gate of arising-ceasing out of compassion. Consequently, he/she is to be defiled and not to be defiled. He/she does not stay in *nirvāṇa* (*mujujeolban*) out of great compassion. He/she stays in *nirvāṇa* for eternity but generates the mind of transmigration out of a great compassion of oneness (*dongchedaebi*) and leaves *nirvāṇa*. For him/her all unenlightened beings are equally considered just as his/her only child.

Remaining outside of *nirvāṇa* is not just for unenlightened beings. It is not only for them but also for oneself. In other words, it benefits both others and one’s self. This is because staying in *nirvāṇa* is not true *nirvāṇa*. Wonhyo thought that staying in *nirvāṇa* was more like being bound by *nirvāṇa*. He wrote “Staying in *nirvāṇa* is to be bound by attachment. Staying in *nirvāṇa* everlastingly is not liberation. Not staying in *nirvāṇa*, one can obtain liberation. Staying in *nirvāṇa*, one cannot leave its bind. Therefore, there is no place for the mind to stay.”

The actions of *muae* can be understood in terms of compassion and liberty. The actions of *muae* as liberty, presuppose compassion. *Muae* is liberty benefiting self and others. It is neither liberty out of ignorance, nor license. It is liberty realized by achieving *nirvāṇa* but not staying in it out of compassion. It is liberty by returning to unenlightened beings. Finally, it is the realization of the heart of Buddhism addressed by Wonhyo “returning to the source of *ilsim* and benefiting unenlightened beings.”

Liberty appearing in *muae* is different from the modern notion of liberty that we pursue today. Wonhyo’s liberty is not individual liberty but is based on the oneness of self and others. It is the liberty of compassion. This liberty is not an expression of individual desires

but it is rooted in a purified character free from ignorance. Considering that the modern liberty we pursue, whether it is positive or negative, solely focuses on realizing each individual's desires and aims at benefiting only the self. Contrary to this, the liberty of *muae* presupposes purified desires and compassion for others beyond the boundary of you and I. It aims at benefiting both you and I. Liberty and compassion are inseparable in *muae*.

Wonhyo's acts of *muae* exemplify Buddhist liberty and compassion. The most distinguished characteristic of these two concepts is their inseparability. This inseparability echoes the heart of Buddhism: the great compassion of oneness. From the perspective of Buddhism, liberty without compassion is a self-centered, false liberty. Compassion without liberty is a passive, false compassion. So realizing one of the two necessitates realizing the other.

The inseparability of compassion and liberty illustrates how the Buddhist notion of liberty differs from that underpinning modern human rights. The modern liberty of human rights is based on an atomistic and possessive individualism as it was established on a strict opposition between you and I. The Buddhist notion of liberty, however, cannot be based on this opposition. For Buddhism, this kind of liberty is the very origin of being bound.

Conclusion

In my examination of the three fundamental ideals of human rights (liberty, equality and brotherhood) in Wonhyo's thoughts and life, the three central concepts from the religious philosophy of Wonhyo, *ilsim*, *muae*, and *hwajaeng*, appear equivalent to the three fundamental ideals of human rights declared in the first article of the Declaration of Human Rights. I have focused predominantly on only *ilsim* and *muae*, arguing that *ilsim* requires compassion and provides the grounds of equality, and that *muae* is the realization of compassion and liberty. In this way, *ilsim* and *muae* embody liberty, equality and compassion.

According to Wonhyo, human beings should return to the source of *ilsim* (*gwilsimwon*). The two gates of *ilsim*, specifically, their inclusiveness and inseparability, are a logical basis for the “return to the source of *ilsim*” or for the “transformation of unenlightened beings into buddhas.” I have argued that the “return to the source of *ilsim*” means “to cease all objects or the external world” (*singman-gyeong*). “Ceasing objects” is to perceive the oneness of objects and the mind or others and the self, and to live in accordance with this perception. In other words, it is to no longer be bound by objects or the duality of others and self, and to live a compassionate life. The “return to the source of *ilsim*” ultimately means to live in the great compassion of oneness (*dongchejabi*). Consequently, *ilsim* requires only compassion. This is proved by the fact that the reason for establishing the *dharma* of *ilsim* is compassion, and that the purpose of practicing *samatha* and *vipāśyanā* is to cultivate compassion.

Ilsim, as a foundation of human equality, is interpreted as a repository of Buddha-nature (*yeoraejang*). A repository of Buddha-nature, as “the possibility of becoming a buddha” or “the moral capability of self-perfection,” is endowed on all human beings. It is the absolute grounds for human equality because it is not destructible under any conditions for any person. When this notion of Buddha-nature is applied to unenlightened beings and buddhas, it explains their sameness and difference. They are the same in the sense that they are both endowed with a repository of Buddha-nature. But they differ in the sense that unenlightened beings are endowed with this “potentiality” and buddhas are endowed with it as a “realization.” The inclusiveness and the inseparability of the two gates is the logical basis for this sameness and difference. It is also a basis for the characteristic of “not-being-defiled and being-defiled” and of “being-defiled and not-being-defiled.” However, the emphasis on the repository of Buddha-nature is to be found not in difference but in sameness because the notion of Buddha-nature requires the same respect for all people as that which is given to buddhas.

Muae is the completion of Wonhyo’s thought in action. *Muae* stands for liberty not bound by any dualistic oppositions and fixed

conventional thoughts. However, it is not just about liberty. In *muae*, what is prior to liberty is compassion. More precisely, liberty and compassion are inseparable in *muae*. We cannot think of one of them without the other. Wonhyo's notion of liberty differs from that used in modern thought. It is not based on atomistic and possessive individualism, but is rooted in the oneness of you and I. It is precisely this that touches on the heart of Buddhism.

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GLOSSARY

<i>alaya-vijñāna</i> (Skt.)	阿賴耶識	<i>jinyeomun</i>	眞如門
<i>amala-vijñāna</i> (Skt.)	阿摩羅識	<i>jungsaengbulseong</i>	衆生佛性
<i>beopgyeilsang</i>	法界一相	<i>burilburi</i>	不一不異
<i>beopsin</i>	法身	<i>kāya</i> (Skt.)	身
<i>bodhisattva</i> (Skt.)	菩薩	<i>Mahāyāna</i> (Skt.)	大乘
<i>bodhi</i> (Skt.)	覺	<i>mang</i>	妄
<i>bon-gak</i>	本覺	<i>mangsim</i>	妄心
<i>bonche</i>	本體	<i>muae</i>	無碍
<i>bulgak</i>	不覺	<i>mujuyeolban</i>	無住涅槃
<i>bulsangriseong</i>	不相離性	<i>mumyeong</i>	無明
<i>bulyeomiyeom</i>	不染而染	<i>nirvāna</i> (Skt.)	涅槃
<i>bunbyeolsim</i>	分別心	<i>pāramitā</i> (Skt.)	波羅蜜
<i>cheongjeongsim</i>	清淨心	<i>saengmyeolmun</i>	生滅門
<i>chongseopseong</i>	總攝性	<i>samatha</i> (Skt.)	止
<i>Daeseunggisillon</i>	大乘起信論	<i>Samguk yusa</i>	三國遺事
<i>dharma</i> (Skt.)	法	<i>saṃsāra</i> (Skt.)	輪迴
<i>dharma dhātu</i> (Skt.)	<i>beopgyeilsang</i>	<i>sasang</i>	四相
<i>dongchedaebi</i>	同體大悲	<i>singman-gyeong</i>	息萬境
<i>dongchejabi</i>	同體慈悲	<i>simbulsaeonggyeong,</i>	心不生境
<i>gaekjin</i>	客塵	<i>gyeongbulsaeongsim</i>	境不生心
<i>gak</i>	覺	<i>simjinyeo</i>	心眞如
<i>Geumgang sammae</i>	金剛三昧	<i>simsaengmyeol</i>	心生滅
<i>gyeongnon</i>	經論	<i>Songgoseungjeon</i>	宋高僧傳
<i>gwan</i>	觀	<i>soseonggeosa</i>	小性居士
<i>gwilsimwon</i>	歸一心源	<i>tathāgatagarbha</i> (Skt.)	<i>yeoraejang</i>
<i>gyeong</i>	境	<i>Vajra-samadhi-sūtra-</i>	<i>Geumgang</i>
<i>Huayen Sūtra</i> (Skt.)	華嚴經	<i>śāstra</i> (Skt.)	<i>sammae</i>
<i>hwajaeng</i>	和諍	<i>vipaśyanā</i> (Skt.)	<i>gyeongnon</i>
<i>ilbeopye</i>	一法界	<i>yāna</i> (Skt.)	觀
<i>ildo</i>	一道	<i>yeomibulyeom</i>	乘
<i>ilgak</i>	一覺	<i>yeomjeongtongsang</i>	染而不染
<i>ilsim</i>	一心	<i>yeomsim</i>	染淨通相
<i>ilsimbeop</i>	一心法	<i>yeoraejang</i>	染心
<i>jemusogyeon</i>	齊無所遣	<i>yoikjungsang</i>	如來藏
<i>jeokjeong</i>	寂靜	<i>Wonhyo</i>	饒益衆生
<i>jeongsim</i>	淨心		元曉
<i>ji</i>	止		