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# The Logic of Reconciliation and Harmonization (*Hwahoe*) in Wŏnhyo's Thought

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## I

The title on which I was asked for to write my essay was 'Wŏnhyo's System of Thought'. Several personal situations have made it inevitable for me to make a slight change in the title and to present a paper under the title it bears now.

In respect to the name, Wŏnhyo, the *Samguk yusa* contains a passage which goes as follows:

To call himself Wŏnhyo was to mean that he will be the first to brighten the Buddhist day; Wŏnhyo is Silla dialect as well, but the people in his time called him by the word meaning 'dawn' in Silla language. (Vol 4, *Ŭihae* 5, Wŏnhyo the Unbridled)

From the above passage we learn that Wŏnhyo is the name he gave himself; that it means dawn in Silla language, and that people in his time called him instead by a Silla word meaning dawn. At the end of his commentaries on *The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith*, Wŏnhyo signed, "Saepuch'an," meaning, written by Saepu. Saepu, if assumed from this context, must be the Silla word which meant dawn. I've resorted to a classical text to confirm the fact that Wŏnhyo was his own way of putting in Chinese letters the name Saepu by which he was called by the people in his time, with a hope to find some clue to understand his thought.

Master Dawn will be his name, if we translate Great Master Wŏnhyo(Wŏnhyotaesa) which has been his title for a thousand years, into our language. The principal concept of Master Dawn, or Great Master Wŏnhyo, has been known, without giving much thought on the issue, as "reconciliation of different interpretations (*hwajaeng*), " or "reconciliation

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and harmonization (hwahoe). Is it really the case that either of these two terms sufficiently represents the major concern of Wŏnhyo's thought? I should say that the issue needs a reconsideration.

What I propose to do here is that first, to briefly explore what is known as Master Dawn's reconciling and harmonizing thought, and then attempt to clarify what I think is the main issue of his thought.

## II

Reconciliation or harmonization, in a strict sense, is not Wŏnhyo's idea; it is, instead, his way of developing his logic, i. e, a logical method to shed light on the real meaning of Buddhist teaching. Since 'reconciliation of different interpretations' is an abbreviation made with the first two letters of the fourletter word, 'reconciliation of doctrinal controversy and harmonization of different expressions [into one] (hwajaeng hoet'ong)', we should always count the invisible two letters, hoet'ong when we consider the term hwajaeng. 'Reconciliation and harmonization (hwahoe)' on the other hand is the abbreviation which carries the meaning of all four words in two letters.

The example of using the term hwahoe by Wŏnhyo himself, among the his extant works, can be found in the *Vajra Samadhi Sūtra* (the Kūmgang sammae gyōng non, vol. 2). Also in the Essentials of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (Yŏlban'gyōng chongyo), we find the Gate of Reconciliation (hwajaeng mun) and the Gate of Harmonization (hoet'ong mun). The Gate of Reconciliation is the fourth of the Gate of Four Merits (Sadŏk mun) which is the last of the six gates in the Gate of *Nirvāṇa* (Yŏlban mun), which in turn is one of the two gates in the Gate of Buddha Nature (Pulsŏng mun). The Gate of Clarifying the Major Teachings of Sūtra is the second of the four gates in 'General Outline (kwanggae punbyŏl) in the Essentials of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. The Gate of Harmonization is the last of the six gates in the Gate of Buddha Nature. In 'On the Major Theme' which serves as an introduction to the Essentials of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, summarizing the main theme of the Sūtra, Wŏnhyo used the term reconciliation of different interpretations as follows:

The *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* being the great ocean of Buddhist dharma and a mysterious store of equality, it is difficult to measure its teaching. Since the meaning of the Sūtra is unmeasurable, boundless, and limitless, there is nothing that is not included in its teaching. By synthesizing teachings from all other sūtras, it returns ten thousands of different streams into one; by obtaining the Buddha's teaching which is not biased even in a

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slightest way, it reconciles a hundred different interpretations. It leads all kinds of creatures to the true nature of non-dualism; awakening them out of a long and dark sleep, it leads them towards the ultimate consummation of great enlightenment.

As we read in the above quoted passage, Wŏnhyo summarized the teaching of the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* by virtue of 'reconciliation of hundred different interpretations'. This is the proof from the extant works of Wŏnhyo that he himself has used the logic of reconciliation and harmonization to explore and shed light on the correct teaching of the Buddha and the true meaning of his teaching.

Jaeng in hwajaeng (reconciliation of different interpretations) is usually understood as a term indicating a quarrel, or an argument, and from this interpretation we understand that hwajaeng should refer to mediating an argumentative debate. To Master Dawn, however, hwajaeng was not a term used to indicate such a commonsensical situation. Hwajaeng being an abbreviation of chohwa ijaeng (harmonization of different interpretations) or hwahoe ijaeng (to mediate different interpretations), the term should mean to reconcile and harmonize various different claims.

Ijaeng (various different interpretations) here is to be read as different opinions, theories and claims, for jaeng in this case should be understood as 'to present one's own interpretations' instead of 'to argue against'. Hwahoe ijaeng, or hwajaeng, then should mean to reconcile and harmonize claims and theories and interpretations which differ among themselves. In other words, hwajaeng is to harmonize various theories and interpretations in an effort to find and shed light on one true Buddhist teaching.

Different opinions and interpretations could have resulted from difference in personal characters and difference in theoretical position taken by an individual in his/her reading of Buddhist texts and doctrines. It could also be the case that Buddhist texts, the source of scholar's interpretation, themselves contain slight differences. Not only did Wŏnhyo reconcile and harmonize different interpretations, but he examined relevant Buddhist texts one by one until he reached an understanding in which there existed not the slightest discrepancy nor any unsolved problems, nor ambiguity or inconsistency: rather, that was the point in which all differences are resolved (t'ongmuni). This is called an all-encompassing interpretation (t'onghoe), or clearing through (sot'ong) or t'ong (running through, all-encompassing) in its condensed form. Also, as for different expressions implying the same Buddhist teaching, Wŏnhyo has them meet in the place of truth in which different expressions become one in truth (hoe ūidong). This

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is known as 'to harmonize interpretations to shed lights on them (hoesŏk homeyŏng)', or simply 'hoe (putting together)'.

The implication is that in exploring teachings of the Buddha and Buddhist doctrines, Wŏnhyo shed light on the true meaning of the Buddha without allowing in the slightest possible way his personal opinions to interfere at all. In order to do that, he first illustrated all the extant interpretations and theories on the issue at hand and then compared differences among them. This is called 'different interpretations (ijaeng)'. In other words, in dealing with a key issue, jaeng refers to the act of enumerating previous scholars' interpretations and theories on the issue, and since the illumination highlights differences, it is called 'different interpretations'.

By pointing out and criticizing right and wrong in each different claim, Wŏnhyo effected a harmony which is in line with Buddhist teaching. This is how 'reconciliation of different interpretations' is achieved. The next step is to harmonize different expressions in Buddhist texts into an understanding which is coherent with the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching, and this is how he arrived at the 'harmonization of different expressions'.

Through this methodology of reconciling different interpretations and harmonizing different expressions, i. e. by hwahoe, the issue at stake comes into light in a most rational and truthful way, which is also the most correct and clear way possible. In Wŏnhyo's writings is frequently found the expression 'theory (tori)' and I think we can use an expression, 'theory of reconciliation of different interpretations and harmonization of different expressions'.

As mentioned earlier, we can find an example of Wŏnhyo's reconciliation and harmonization in the Essentials of the *Nirvāna Sūtra*. In the text, at the outset of "the Gate of Clarifying Major Teaching of the Sūtra" Master Dawn presents six different scholars' interpretations ('Theory of Six Scholars'), which provide us with an example which illustrates different interpretations (ijaeng). In other words, in explicating the major teaching of the *Nirvāna Sūtra*, Wŏnhyo first enumerates different extant theories on the text. Though all six are exploring the same text, their interpretations are all different; that is why it is called 'different interpretations or claims'.

In enumerating different interpretations, Wŏnhyo's intention is not merely to present them, nor is he severely criticizing them or correcting their claims in order to have his own interpretation heard. In this case, to maintain fair objectivity, he uses a dialogic style in his evaluation of different interpretations. This style allows readers to obtain a correct understanding

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of the major thesis of the sūtra seen from a specific point of view, which is called reconciliation of different interpretations.

The six interpretations are all different, but they are the same to the extent that they explicate major teachings of the sūtra. The goal is not to refute another's theory, nor to oppose the other's claim, rather, Wŏnhyo brings into relief in a positive way different perspectives from which each scholar comes to understand the truth in their individual ways. This allows opportunity for the various different interpretations (ijaeng) to be understood in one (hwahoe), hence reconciliation of different interpretations.

The last section of the 'Gate of Buddha Nature' is also called 'Gate of Harmonization of Different Expressions' which, though included in the Gate of Buddha Nature, serves as an overall conclusion to the "Gate of Clarifying the Major Teachings of the Sūtra". Wŏnhyo divides it into two sections: 't'ongmuni' and 'hoe ũidong'.

'T'ongmuni' means to explicate an all-encompassing meaning (t'ongsŏk) out of different expressions. Expressions here refer to the expressions in Buddhist texts. Differences in expression refers to the different phrasings which are quoted as proof of one's interpretations. Wŏnhyo provides a detailed and well articulated explication to make it known that different expressions [out of Buddhist texts] are not in fact telling different things. This is why to find a common underlying meaning out of different expressions is called t'ongmuni.

This is similar to 'clarifying the same implication out of different phrasings (hoe ũidong)'. The term is used to clarify passages in sūtras which carry similar meanings in different phrasings. In such a case, by showing that the same logic is used in different expressions, Wŏnhyo clarifies the meaning of the passages. One idea can be presented in various different ways. This is so also in Buddhist texts where the same issue is explicated via different expressions and phrasings. 'Clarifying the same implication out of different phrasings (hoe ũidong)' is achieved by quoting and enumerating sentences which carry similar meaning and showing that the implications these phrasing is the same.

'Harmonization of different expressions (hoet'ong)' is the abbreviation of the combination of two words, i. e., 'finding a common underlying meaning out of different expressions (t'ongmuni)' and 'clarifying the same implication out of different phrasings (hoe ũidong)'. The purpose of this effort is to obtain a correct understanding of the Buddhist teaching revealed in Buddhist texts. This being the case, I don't think there should be any

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problem in using the expression, hoesök sot'ong. Harmonization of different expressions, however, can be understood as Master Dawn's theory of reconciliation and harmonization, as far as it is understood in connection with the reconciliation of different interpretations as discussed earlier.

### III

In sum, Wönhyo's idea of reconciliation of different interpretations is not to be understood as a theory which aims at either reconciling different interpretations or having reconciliation as its goal. Nor is its sole purpose to arrive at the point in which various different expressions and teachings in the Buddhist texts converge into one. Wönhyo's intention in employing syncretism, instead, is to bring into light the true meaning of the Buddha's teaching and Buddhist doctrine via reconciliation of different interpretations and harmonization of different expressions, and in this sense one cannot say that 'reconciliation and harmonization' is Wönhyo's major concern.

The core of his thought, if we insist to find one, is to highlight the world of Mind Nature (puljagwi, muwi) by employing synchronic method. The world of mind nature as exposed in his various writings, is the world of Buddha mind and that of One Mind. Since the mind is the origin of both material and immaterial aspects, the state of non-dualism of body and mind, which is the core of his thought, I should say, is One Mind which complies with the Buddha's teaching.

The Buddha's teaching is absolutely equal without the slightest bias. However, Buddhist texts, as various titles for different texts indicate, are not the same in explicating what each text considers the major teaching of Buddhism. With research on the voluminous Buddhist texts and systematization of its theory, Buddhism began to set itself up as a field of academic discipline. In the Indian Buddhist context, a division within Sangha led to a period of sectarian Buddhism, which was followed by the major division of Mahāyāna. Seen from the doctrines advocated by each school, however, Buddhism can be broadly categorized into two groups of Sōng chong and Sang chong.

Many diverse schools in Chinese Buddhism, the culmination in Buddhist theory and system, can be grouped again into two schools of Dharma nature (C. Fa-hsing; K. Pöpsōng) and *Dharmalakṣaṇa* (C. Fa-hsiang; K. Pöpsang). Applying this to Indian Buddhism, from a theoretical viewpoint, the former belongs to *Mādhyamika* doctrine of śūnyatā (in Hinayāna, Satyasiddhiśāstra belongs to this category), while the latter, to the Yogācāra

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theory of consciousness-only (in Hīnayāna, Abhidharmakośa). In Chinese Buddhism, the former belongs to such schools as San-lun(Three Treatise), T'ien-t'ai, and Hua-yen (Avataṣaka), and the latter encompasses schools of She-lun tsung (K. Sōpnon chong), Yogācāra (K. Chaŭn yusik chong), and Abhidharma-kośa (K. Kusa chong).

Some among Korean scholars have credited Wōnhyo as a Hua-yen scholar, others as one belonging to the School of Middle Path (Chungdo chong), and still others have categorized him with the Dharma Nature School (Pōpsōng chong) --- actually there was no such school as Dharma Nature. Some thought that the School of Middle Path was the San-lun school of Mādhyamika. Whether Wōnhyo belongs to Hwaōm or San-lun, nevertheless, we should count him with the school of Dharma Nature in Sōng school. While it is true that Wōnhyo has many writings which are mainly classified as Dharma Nature school, still there are several of his works, such as Haesim milkyōng so, Yuga non so, Sōng yusiknon chong yo, which are colored by *Dharmalakṣaṇa* and this makes it possible to group him with Dharma Nature.

Wōnhyo's theory, however, does not favor either of the two streams, not to speak of the fact that such a doctrinal system found in Chinese Buddhism was yet to be developed in his time. The world of One Mind, as discussed in this paper, is the basic concept of Wōnhyo's idea exposed via his syncretism. The only doctrine that Master Dawn explicated was to expose the Buddha's teaching as it is so that the teaching can be understood correctly.

In conclusion, Wōnhyo's Buddhism shows no preference to either Dharma Nature school or *Dharmalakṣaṇa* school, the two great streams in the development of Buddhism; Wōnhyo's sole purpose of developing syncretic Buddhism lies in his intention to expose the world of One Buddha Mind. Seen in this context, Wōnhyo's syncretism and harmonization is to be understood as a methodology instead of a major concern of his thought. What Wōnhyo took as his major teaching was One Mind, in which Sōng and Sang are not two.

Immediately after obtaining enlightenment, it has been said, Wōnhyo shouted: "Outside mind there is no dharma, what's the use of searching for truth outside mind?" His exclamation of enlightenment once again confirms for us that One Mind is the only ground on which Master Wōnhyo anchored his teaching.