

Wōnhyo: A Study of His Compilations

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Wōnhyo selected a fourth century translation attributed to (Zhu) Fo-Nien (竺佛念), as one way of investigating some of the major themes of the famous *Dasabhūmika-sūtra* (十地經). The work of (Zhu) Fo-Nien was entitled *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing* (菩薩瓔珞本業經, The Sutra (explaining) the Primary (Yogic) Activities that Comprise the Garland of the Bodhisattva). The translation was done between the 10th year of Chien Yuan, Former Jin (前秦) dynasty (C.E. 374) and the Yao-Jin (姚秦) dynasty that started in C.E. 384. (T.55, 2151, 358c) Only the latter scroll of Wōnhyo's work is extant and therefore we are unable to judge the full scope of his compilation. The opening paragraph of the scroll takes us directly to the Ninth of the Ten Levels of the Bodhisattva's activities. Following the lead of (Zhu) Fo-Nien, Wōnhyo focuses on the Forty Two Stages of a Bodhisattva. It is at the Ninth Level that the Fortieth Stage is realized and the Bodhisattva attains the ability known as "Readiness of Speech." There are few texts that give us such detail on the Ninth Level, that is the final preparation for achieving the highest stage in which the Bodhisattva is called a "Dharma Cloud." It is

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in the manifestation as the "cloud" of the "teaching" that the "Readiness of Speech" is fully expressed.

Wōnhyo lived at a special time in the development of East Asian Buddhism. The years of his life C.E. 617-686 were filled with advances in the knowledge of Indian Buddhism. It was during those years that Xuan-Zhang (玄奘) had returned to China from his pilgrimage to India and did the major translations of the Sanskrit texts he had acquired. Other translators were at work continuing the long term efforts of the East Asian community to create a complete Chinese character version of the Buddhist teachings. Missionary monks such as Jñānabhadra¹ Divakara², Prabhamitra³, and Dharmagupta⁴ represented the presence of Indian and Central Asian translators, unlike Xuan-Zhang who was one of China's own. Certainly, during Wōnhyo's lifetime, the work of Xuan-Zhang overshadowed all other translation efforts in China.⁵

As important as the translations were for Wōnhyo, it was the development of the "compilation text" which provided the model for his own work. These "compilation texts" were part of the scholastic approach of the East Asian Buddhist monastics. While the translators provided the basic data for Buddhist teachings, the question that remained was that of how to make use of this large text corpus. Starting in the sixth century, the monks began to make compilations of quotations they abstracted from the translations. The creative work of these writers was focused on finding the relevant passages from the sutras and commentaries to explain and define specific topics. This was not mere copying of text data; it was an attempt to assimilate the material into patterns of discourse that would help readers to fully understand the underlying message of the tradition. In one sense the compilations were a type of cataloguing and indexing of key passages

1 He completed one translation (T.12, no. 377/K.107) between 664-665.

2 He completed 18 translations in the 680s (T.12, no. 347/K.49; T.10, no. 295/K.104 (685); T.2, no. 187/K.111 (683) etc).

3 He completed 3 translations (T.13, no. 402/K.78 (627); T.130, no. 566/K.578 (630-632); T.31, no. 1604/K.586 (630).

4 He completed 10 translations (T.16, no. 716/K.157 (616-617); T.14, no. 449/K.176 (616); T.1, no. 25/K.661 (617) etc.

5 Xuan Cang completed more than 75 translations, some of them covering hundreds of scrolls.

from the translations of the Indian texts. This process required the compilers to have knowledge of a large number of texts and to have a method of identifying and extracting the relevant passages for a particular tenet of the faith. The effort needed to compose such anthologies was no less than that of the translator. By the time of Wōnhyo this type of analysis and compilation was an important feature of monastic writing.

In order to understand the situation of the 7th century in East Asian Buddhist scholarship, it is helpful to look at some of the works being composed at that time. For Wōnhyo, the compilations were seen as the most effective approach to using the translations. If the "words" of the Buddha could be employed to explain the terminology and ideas, that approach would be superior to any other form of exposition. However, the translations of Indian texts was not limited to the "words" of the Buddha; there were commentaries that discussed and explained the "words." Since the commentaries were attributed to monks who were held in high esteem and in some cases identified as bodhisattvas said to be similar to a Buddha, the texts were given canonic status and included in the compilations. Perhaps the most famous of these commentaries was the *Ta-zhi-du-lun* (大智度論)⁶ attributed to Nāgārjuna and based on the *Pañcaviṃśati prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. The "compilation texts" added a new dimension to Buddhist literature. One of the largest of the "compilation texts" was the encyclopedia of Dao-Shi (道世), *Fa-yuan-zhu-lin* (法苑珠林): a 100 scroll work was completed in 668. It entirely consists of quotations from the Chinese Buddhist canon arranged according to doctrinal items.⁷ Dao-Shi also composed a shorter work that divided the extracts from the sutras as answers to a series of questions.⁸ Dao-Xuan was another compiler of the 7th century. His works include: *Guang-hong-ming-ji* (廣弘明集) which attempts to use the quotations to demonstrate the way in which the Buddhist teachings can be spread.⁹ Some of the writers of

6 T.25, no. 1509/K.549 Translated by Kūmarajīva (402-406) in 100 scrolls.

7 T.53, no. 2122/ K.1406 Compilation completed in the first year of Tsung-Zhang (Tang dynasty) 668.

8 T.55, no. 2149/ K.1057 Compilation completed in the first year of Lin-De (Tang dynasty) 664.

this time were also using the compilations to refute the Taoists or those in opposition to a particular school of thought.¹⁰ Wōnhyo had before him translations, commentaries, and East Asian "compilation texts" and from these he constructed his own literary contributions. In the case of his study of the *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing*, he made use of quotations from sutras and commentaries. In the first three sections of the extant scroll of his work, we find extracts from nine canonic texts:

- (1) *Si-di-jing-lun (Dasabhūmikasūtrasāstra)* T.26, 1522/K.550
Attributed to Vasubandhu and translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci in 508 in the Latter Wei dynasty.(T.2154, 541a:8)
- (2) *Bi-mo-shi-mu-lie-jing* T.1, 67/K.667
Translated by Zhi-Qian between 223-253 in the Wu dynasty.
(T.22, 2154, 548b:15)
- (3) *Ren-wang-ban-ruo-bo-le-mi-jing* T.55, 245/K.19
Translated by Kūmarajiva between 402-409 Latter Chin dynasty.
(T. 2151, 359a:16; c:1)
- (4) *Da-fang-guang-fo-hua-yan-jing* T.8, 278/K.79
Translated by Buddhahadra between 418-422 Liu Sung dynasty. (T.55, 2145, 11c:9 and T.55, 2151-357a:13)
- (5) *Zui-sheng-wen-pu-sa-shi-zhu-chu-gou-duan-jie-jing* T.10, 309/K.382
Translated by (Zhu) Fo-Nien between 365-385 Former Chin dynasty.
(T. 55, 2149, 286c:3)
- (6) *Da-cheng-qi-xin-lun (Mahayānasradhotpādasāstra)* T.32, 1666/K.616
Attributed to Aśvaghōṣa and translated by Paramartha in 553 in the Liang dynasty.(T. 55, 2154, 538b:6)
- (7) *Yang-que-mo-le-jing (Aṅgulimāliysūtra)* T.2, 120/K.410
Translated by Gunabhadrā between 435-443 Liu Sung dynasty.
(T.55, 2151, 3226b:4)
- (8) *Ru-leng-qie-jing (Lankāvatārasūtra)* T.16, 671/K.160
Translated by Bodhiruchi in 513 Latter Wei dynasty.
(T.55, 2153-387b:11)
- (9) *Da-bei-jing (Mahākaraṇapūṇḍarikasūtra)* T.12, 380/K.110
Translated by Narendrayasa in 558 Gao Qi dynasty.
(T.55, 2153, 385a:26)

These texts had been translated into Chinese between 223-558 C.E.

9 T.52, no. 2103/ K.1081 Compilation completed in the last year of Zhen-Guang (Tang dynasty) 649.

10 See for example Fa-lin's *Bian-zheng-lun* (T.52, no. 2110/ K.1076 completed in 626) which focuses on the Taoist controversies or Xuan-I's *Zhen-Zheng-lun* (T.52, no. 2112/ K.1078 completed after 684) dealing with refutation of false views.

which means that there had been time for them to become well established in the Buddhist community by the time of Wŏnhyo. While Xuan-Zhang was hard at work making translations during Wŏnhyo's lifetime, we do not find any of his texts being copied in this treatise. A complete listing of all the works cited in Wŏnhyo would help to answer the questions about how manuscripts of translations were copied and distributed and how long it took for them to become available in the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula. The most recent of the translations had been done nearly sixty years before Wŏnhyo's birth date. That means that at least seven or eight decades had passed before he was actually reading a copy of Narendrayasa's translation. The process of making copies of manuscripts was a time consuming and expensive one but we can see in just these few pages of Wŏnhyo's compilation that he had a range of translations available to him representing a span of 300 years of activity in the Buddhist monasteries. It is worth noting that none of these translations were done after the Sui dynasty began in 589. We do not, for example, find him quoting such monks as Jnanagupta, who made 36 translations in the Sui period. Jnanagupta's works were completed one or two decades before Wŏnhyo's birth and it will be of interest to see if any of them show up in his quotations. It is easier to understand that a contemporary such as Xuan-Zhang would not be a source, given the difficulties of distribution of material. It is a bit harder to account for the lack of any of the translations being made in the recently unified China. All of the sites of the translations belong to the pre-Sui period of the Three Kingdoms and the North South divisions. This is one indication that the northern empires provided much of the information and practices for 6th and 7th century Buddhism in Korean peninsula.

In the opening section of the work, Wŏnhyo takes one line from the *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing* and begins his exposition on the topic of "Readiness of Speech" of the Bodhisattva. His strategy of using excerpts from sutras and commentaries is immediately obvious. The next 60 lines are mostly direct quotes from Bodhiruci's *Si-di-jing-lun* (*Daśabhūmikasūtraśāstra*).¹¹ Even the references from the

Dasabhūmikasūtra used by Wōnhyo are taken from Bodhiruci's commentary rather than one of the sutra translations. In our present editions, there is no clear indication of where the units of quotations start and stop. In the *Si-di-jing-lun(Dasabhūmikasūtrasāstra)* we at least have a clear definition of the "sutra" portion and the "lun(commentary)" referring to that portion. For the extant Wōnhyo, it is necessary for the scholar to find the direct quotations in order to properly identify the words that are his and the words that are taken from the sutras and commentaries. When all of the sources for the words are accounted, the work of Wōnhyo takes on a distinctive flavor. He often does not create the text with his own words but chooses to construct the intricate model with borrowed words. The model is also borrowed. For example, it is in the *Si-di-jing-lun(Dasabhūmikasūtrasāstra)* that we find the method of indicating technical terms by the ancient Indian method of analysis into the number of divisions. Every Buddhist term that is identified by a numerical identifier must be considered a "technical term" since it is defined in a specific way by determining the structure in terms of the divisions that give the semantic basis for the meaning. In Bodhiruci's commentary attributed to Vasubandhu, we find him giving us the major numerical list and then a break down of each of the items followed by their own numeric divisions. That is to say we are told that there are Six Discourses and the First Discourse has two divisions and the first of those two divisions has three. In order to keep track of the structure of the text, one must keep a separate listing of these numbered terms and the subsequent numberings that are placed in secondary and tertiary modes. To the degree that Wōnhyo uses this strategy, it is important to compare it with Bodhiruci's model, which must have been of great influence. It is just this form of numbering in the commentary attributed to Vasubandhu that we see in many of Wōnhyo's writings.

There is another distinctive pattern that emerges in the passages

11 While the *Si di jing lun* is identified as the work of Vasubandhu, some elements in the text remind us of the problems of authorship in East Asian Buddhist texts. There are sections that make references to Chinese glyph constructions that obviously originated in China rather than India. Whether these are inserts into an Indian original or an indication of a mainly East Asian work still requires investigation.

of this treatise. Wōnhyo is attempting to define the primary yogic activities that comprise the so-called "garland" of a Bodhisattva. He has searched for all of the "activities" of the Bodhisattva found in the *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing*. These activities are listed in an order that is found in the main sutra, ie. *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing*. When an activity is listed, Wōnhyo adds a nominalizer, and so these passage may be translated as "The Bodhisattva is one who does..." Having indicated the "activities" performed by the Bodhisattva, Wōnhyo next gives a short explanation followed by a causal indicator and this may be "rendered "and that is because..." In twelve pages, he repeats this pattern nearly 100 times as he first identifies an "activity" of the Bodhisattva and then defines or explains it in a causal sense. In the midst of the pattern of nominal and causal divisions, he also adds an emphatic. This third emphatic character allows him to take note of the end of one explanation and the beginning of a new topic. By taking note of these three punctuation characters, we can see the structure of his comments. It is not a pattern of prose but rather a type of dictionary. First, we are given the term and then a causal statement which helps explain the term. An example of this is the following:

W 500c:

(The Bodhisattva is one whose yogic activities) have a beginning.

(This is because the Bodhisattva) takes the Tathagata's "Treasure" as his basis.

In this we see that Wōnhyo takes a phrase from the *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing* ginning and gives another phrase Tathagatas' Treasure (also from have a be the *Pu-sa-yin-le-ben-yeh-jing*) as the causal element. His compilation is quite terse but effective. He has tied together two quoted phrases in a way that explains the meaning and the connection between the phrases. This is not just the copying of words from the text, it is a sophisticated matching of terms within a systematic description of the "primary yogic activities that constitute the garland of the bodhisattva." In other words the yogic activities of a bodhisattva have their source or beginning in the treasure, that is the

teaching of the *Tathagata*. It was quite a feat to get so much meaning packed into these short quotations.

Another example of his matching:

W 503c

(The Bodhisattva is one whose yogic activities) result in the arising of the teaching and the conversion (of sentient beings) in all (stages).

(This is because the Bodhisattva) (even when still) below the Seventh Bhumi where there is only the arising of karmic activities, possesses the arising of the teaching and the conversion (of sentient beings).

In this passage we see Wōnhyo describing the fact that a Bodhisattva who is at a low level of yogic activity, that is in the stage of Bhumi One to Bhumi Seven, can nonetheless teach and convert. Therefore, he uses these phrases in nominal and causal frameworks to help explain the "Readiness of Speech" of the Bodhisattva even before he has reached the Seventh Bhumi.

I have to admit that when I became aware of the extent of Wōnhyo's reliance on the words of Bodhiruci and the other sources, I began to wonder if he had much to offer us. What was the contribution of someone who was so closely tied to his textual sources and had a strategy that relied on piecing together quotations from a wide array of sources? Was he merely reiterating the work of others without any significant input of his own? It took me sometime before I started to see how he had mastered his craft. Humanities of the present age put great emphasis on individual analysis and creative conclusions that are the intellectual product of the mind of a scholar. At first glance, Wōnhyo seems to fail in this approach to study. However, if we accept his methodology rather than pressing our own agenda on him, then we can see that the connections and matching of sources indicate his learning and his ability to handle the complexity of the Buddhist teachings. The insights that he gives us regarding the "primary yogic activities that form the "garland" of the Bodhisattva" are valuable resources for the study of the development of Mahayana.

While we can see the individual contribution of Wŏnhyo, it must be kept in mind that he relied on the work that was being done in East Asian Buddhism prior to his own era. If we pull Wŏnhyo apart from his interactions with the larger community of Buddhist translators, commentators, and compilers, we will run the risk of destroying his most important contributions by trying to make him unique. He was uniquely successful precisely because he did rely on the texts for most of his words and phrases. He was successful because he did follow the models and strategies of the previous commentators. He was successful because he knew the teachings of the tradition and had a profound understanding of his sources. It is hard to imagine that he would ever find satisfaction in any study that depicted him as the originator of the ideas and concepts with which he filled his text pages. A close reading of this one commentary indicates that he wanted to be known as someone who had an intimate knowledge of the existing literature and the ability to effectively use it for teaching and explanations. He must have been delighted with each discovery of a passage that could be fitted into his compilation. Wŏnhyo should not be known for the content, that he happily copied. His crowning ability was the way in which he could structure and apply the content in a functional capacity.