

# Wŏnhyo's Essentials of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*: Translation of Chapters 1-2 with Annotated Notes

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*This article is an English translation of the Essentials of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra, Chapters 1-2 with Annotated Notes. The Taehyedogyongchongyo (TDC) is a thematic essentials on the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra. In the TDC, Wŏnhyo deals with the most essential and important content of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra. Wŏnhyo often uses the two hermeneutical conception to explicate the text: explications based on "analysis" and "synthesis." Wŏnhyo explores the text's main themes though this multi-approach. Judging from the content of the Taehyedogyongchongyo, it is certain that its original text was Hsüan-tsang's version of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra.*

**Key Words:** Wŏnhyo, Prajñā, Paramitā, Taehyedogyongchongyo, Three kinds of prajñā.

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## Part One: Introduction

This article is an English translation of the *Essentials of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Chapters 1-2 with Annotated Notes.<sup>1</sup> The *Taehyedogyongchongyo* (TDC, 大慧度經宗要; C. Ta-hui-tu-ching-tzung-yao) is a thematic essentials (宗要, K. chongyo, C. tzung-yao) on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (MPPS, 大般若波羅蜜多經; *Sūtra* of Perfection of Great Wisdom). In the TDC, Wŏnhyo (617-686 C.E.) deals with the most essential and important content of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

According to Pak Chonghong, Wŏnhyo often uses the two hermeneutical conception to explicate the text: explications based on “analysis” (開, K. *kae*; ‘to open up for analysis’) and “synthesis” (合, K. *hap*; ‘to bring together in a synthesis’) (Pak, 1966:59-88). Robert Buswell interprets: “In analytical mode, Wŏnhyo seeks to unpack for the reader the vast array of teachings and doctrines appearing in a text, as a way of illustrating the diversity and originality of Buddhist doctrinal teachings. In synthetic mode, Wŏnhyo adopts a synthetic perspective that explains how the variant ideas described in a text can actually be viewed as complementing one another. Both of these hermeneutical devices applied together then yield a description of the principal topic and insight of the text: the ‘thematic essentials (Buswell, 2002:128).” Wŏnhyo explores the text's main themes though this multi-approach.

Judging from the content of the *Taehyedogyongchongyo*, it is certain that its original text was Hsüan-tsang's version of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.<sup>2</sup> Since it was not recorded in Uich'on (1055-1101)'s *New General Catalogue of All the Scriptures of Doctrinal Schools* (新編諸宗教藏總錄, T.55. No.2184) which was written in 1090 (the 7th year of King Sonjong's reign, Koryo), the *Taehyedogyongchongyo*

1 For introduction and English translation of the Chapter 3 of Wŏnhyo's Essentials of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, see Yong-pyo Kim, “Wŏnhyo's Interpretation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.” In *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Cultrue*. Vol.2. pp.101-106.

2 Before Hsüan-tsang's translation, the *Prajñā* scriptures were partially translated in the period from the late Han Dynasty. There were about 30 sections and 150 volumes of various *prajñā sūtra* before Hsüan-tsang's. The second part of this *sūtra* corresponds to 27 volumes of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* translated by Kumārajiva, The 4th part corresponds to 10 volumes of *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* translated by Kumārajiva.

(TDC) may have already disappeared by the early Koryo period. However, in the *Catalogue of Transmission of the Dharma Lamp in the East* (東域傳燈目錄), which was composed in Japan in 1094, we find the following sentence “One volume of the *Taehyedogyogchongyo*”, and an explanatory note.

The *Taehyedogyongchongyo* is divided into six sections: (1) the general idea of the *sūtra* (2) the main purport of the *sūtra* (3) the meaning of the title on the *sūtra* (4) the origin of expounding the *sūtra* (5) this *sūtra*'s standpoint from the various tenets of Buddhism (6) a construction on the *sūtra*.

The sub-structure of the TDC, Chapters 1-2 can be classified as follows:

1. Outline of the General Intent of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*
  - (1) *Prajñā* is the ultimate path.
  - (2) Since the main purport of this *sūtra* is *prajñā*, there is nothing to explain; nothing to manifest; nothing to hear; nothing to attain.
  - (3) The merit of worship and receiving of this teaching would be as broad as empty space.
  - (4) The meaning of *Mahā-prajñā-pāramitā*
  - (5) The meaning of *ching (sūtra)* refers to eternity in nature and *dharma* in characteristic.
  - (6) The *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* consists of 100 volumes with 11 sections.
2. Manifestation of the Main Purport of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*
  - (1) There are three kinds of *prajñā*
    - (a) *prajñā* in scripture/word
    - (b) *prajñā* of true characteristics
    - (c) *prajñā* of contemplation
  - (2) Elucidating *prajñā* of the true characteristics
    - (a) The four different opinions:
      - i) The thusness manifested in the nature arisen by other-

- dependency is the true characteristic.
- ii) 'The existence which arises from dependent origination' is emptiness and *tathata* (thusness, suchness).
  - iii) The existence which arises from dependent origination is either 'existence' nor 'emptiness'.
  - iv) The Buddha's teachings of the ultimate aspect of truth and the secular aspect of truth are nothing but a hypothesis, but a hypothesis, and are not the real state.
- (b) Which above view of the four patriarchs' is true?
- (c) *Tathāgata-garbha* is the *prajñā* of the true characteristics.
- (3) The *prajñā* of contemplation.
- (a) There are different opinions about *prajñāpāramitā*.
    - i) One asserts that wisdom without illusion is an aspect of *prajñāpāramitā*.
    - ii) Another says that *prajñāpāramitā* is the wisdom with illusion.
    - iii) The third opines that both wisdom without illusion and with illusion of the *bodhisattva* are *prajñāpāramitā*.
    - iv) The fourth states, *prajñāpāramitā* is form which cannot be grasped, for all of existence, non-existence, impermanence, *Śūnya* (empty), and ultimate existence are *prajñāpāramitā*
  - (b) Which of the above opinions is more correct?
  - (c) Each of them is true because they all have their own principles.
  - (d) There are three kinds of wisdom of the Buddha:
    - i) For those who need religious training (*saikṣa*)
    - ii) For one who no longer needs religious training (*arhat*)
    - iii) Neither *saikṣa* nor *arhat*
- (4) Elucidating two kinds of wisdom simultaneously
- (a) There is no aspect of any elements to be attained and there is no subjective view of *prajñā*.

- (b) Are there three kinds of wisdom of contemplation?  
 (c) Since *prajñā* itself has transcended all forms and views,  
 it cannot be equal.

## Part Two: An Annotated Translation of the *Taehyedogyongchongyo*

### I. Chapter One: Depicting the General Idea of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*

To explain this *sūtra*, it is desirable that we divide it into six parts.

- (1) Depicting the general idea of the *sūtra*
- (2) Depicting the main purport of the *sūtra*
- (3) Clearing up the meaning of the title on the *sūtra*
- (4) Clarifying the origin of expounding the *sūtra*
- (5) Classifying this *sūtra*'s standpoint  
 from the various tenets of Buddhism
- (6) Placing a construction on the *sūtra*

Generally speaking, since *prajñā* is a profound and occult truth it cannot be described truth or truthlessness, nor can it be depicted as recondite or not. The nature of *prajñā* is empty to such an extent that it is nothing but tranquil. As it is quite a tranquil state without affliction and discretion, *prajñā* is open and does not encounter obstacles. Its true aspect has no form, it has nothing formless,<sup>3</sup> and as the light of grace emanating from *prajñā* has no other brightness, it has nothing brightless.<sup>4</sup>

If *prajñā* has no other brightness, or anything brightless, who could vanish the darkness of stupidity and attain the brightness of sagacity? If it had no form, nor anything formless, how could we demolish the provisional name (*prajñāpti*) and how could we describe

3 Even if *prajñā* has no form that we can see, all things in nature are also the true aspect of *prajñā*.

4 The light of grace emanating from *prajñā* pervades the worlds in the ten quarters and penetrates the three stages of time.

noumenon?<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the provisional name and the transient phenomenal world are nothing but the noumenon of suchness. Nevertheless, its true aspect cannot be described as ‘the four kinds of unhindered speech’ of the Buddha and *Bodhisattva*.<sup>6</sup> Thus the noumenon of *prajñā* is a profound and recondite truth. Consequently, the darkness of avarice, passion, and ignorance is also the brightness of sagacity which we cannot perceive by the five kinds of eyes.<sup>7</sup> Such being the case, we should diminish and lessen the darkness of adultery, anger, and ignorance through the wisdom of observation.

Since the main purport of this *sūtra* is *prajñā*, there is no way to explain its gist, or show its essentials, nor to listen to its essential points and attain it. As *prajñā* is the absolute Emptiness (*śūnyatā*),<sup>8</sup> it is the maxim beyond description and discrimination of right and wrong. Though there is no showing its form, there is nothing that it does not reveal, because Noumenon and Phenomenon are not two separate sets of entities. As there is no attainment, there is no non-attainment. The six *pāramitās* containing all kinds of deeds are completed, and all sorts of virtues of the five kinds of eyes emerge and thrive out of *prajñā*. Accordingly, *prajñā* is the essential storehouse of *bodhisattvas* and the

5 There is no difference whatever between *nirvāna* and *samsāra*; Noumenon and Phenomena are not two separate sets of entities, nor are they two states of the same thing. The absolute, looked at through the thought-forms of constructive imagination, is the empirical world; and conversely, the absolute is the world viewed without the distorting media of thought.

6 ‘The four kinds of unhindered speech’ of the Buddha and *Bodhisattva*: (1) The thorough knowledge and command of words and sentences explaining the *Dharma*; (2) The thorough knowledge of the meanings of the teachings; (3) The absence of impediment in communicating in various dialects; (4) The absence of impediment in preaching to people in accordance with their propensities.

7 ‘The five kinds of eyes’: (1) The eye of those who have a material body (2) The divine eye of celestial beings in the world of form (3) The eye of wisdom by which the two vehicles observe the thought of non-substantiality or emptiness. (4) The eye of law by which *bodhisattvas* perceive all teachings in order to lead human beings to enlightenment. (5) The Buddha’s eye; the four kinds of eyes enumerated above, exist in the Buddha’s body.

8 Though *śūnyatā* is often translated as ‘void’ or ‘nothingness’, the translation ‘relativity’ is preferable. *śūnyatā* does not deny the concept of existence as such, but holds that all existence and the constituent elements which make up existence are dependent upon causation. As the causal factors are changing every moment, it means that there can be no static existence. Accordingly, *śūnyatā* categorically denies the possibility of any form of phenomenal static existence. All phenomena are relative and dependent upon other phenomena.

true mother of all the Buddhas. And so, when the Buddha who admired *prajñā*, the king of the highest path, was about to take his seat in order to preach this *sūtra*, the sky offered four kinds of flowers to him, the globe admired this Buddha and jubilated with six kinds of motions, the *bodhisattoas* of the worlds in the ten quarters came from remote parts, and the world of desire and the world of form emitted bright light for him. *Sadapralapa* (常啼), the guardian deity of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, remained standing for seven years in order to protect this *sūtra* until his bone marrow dried up. The deities of the heavens, like the sand-grains of the Ganges, listened to this *sūtra* and received the prediction to attain enlightenment.

Furthermore, even though the Kings of Yao (堯) and Shun (舜) had no rival in the world, and Zhou (周公) and Confucius (孔子) were the leading figures in virtue and wisdom, they could not give offence to the law of Heaven on the contrary, all the heavens respect and admire this *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* and dare not give offence to the teachings of the Buddha. Such being the case, how can we compare this *sūtra* with the other thing?

Therefore the *sūtra* says, “Even if someone else were to take from this discourse on *dharma* only one stanza of four lines, and demonstrate it to others, the reward of virtue is so boundless that it is much superior to that of sacrificing as many lives as the sand-grains of the Ganges. On the contrary, if someone else were to raise a notion to speak ill of this *sūtra*, it would be heavier than ‘the five rebellious sins’<sup>9</sup> and staying in ‘the hell of interminable pain’ for one thousand *kalpas* could not remove the sins.”

The word ‘*mahāprajñāpāramitā*’ is a Sanskrit term, which, translated into Chinese, is ‘dahuidu’. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, means ‘Great Wisdom *sūtra*’, and can be considered source material for teaching on the emptiness. As *prajñā* can neither be perceived by knowledge, nor can it be perceived by us, and since *prajñā* is the transcendental

9 The five rebellious sins: the five deadly sins: (1) killing one's father, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing an *arhat*, (4) causing the Buddha's body to bleed, and (5) causing disunity in the Buddhist order. Those who have committed any of these five sins will be destined to fall into ‘The hell of interminable pain’ for many *kalpas*.

wisdom beyond discrimination, it has nothing unconscious, and so it is called *prajñā*. Since *prajñā* is the root of our mind it has no destination that it needs to reach, and as *prajñā* has already reached its native province it has no destination that it could not reach, thus, it is called *pāramitā* ('crossing over, salvation').

Accordingly, *prajñā* is omniscient and omnipotent, and so produces a 'great world-honoured sage' such as the Buddha, and can also produce the highest wisdom of enlightenment, boundlessly. Thereupon, we call this *sūtra* the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, as it stands for permanence and *dharma*. Permanence means that all things are empty and unattainable, and so permanence is a denotation of the Buddha and all patriarchs. As the *dharma-dhātu* and reality are only two different expressions of the same thing, and in the long run are both empty, we should convert the flow of birth and death into the way of *nirvāṇa*.

This *sūtra* is composed of 600 volumes and is divided into 16 sections. The first 400 volumes comprise the first section, and in this first section there are 78 units, the first of which reveals this *sūtra*'s origin.

## II. Chapter Two: Depicting the Main Purport of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*

The essence of this *sūtra* is *prajñā*. Speaking generally, there are three aspects of wisdom: 1) Wisdom of letters 2) The *prajñā* inherent in all sentient beings 3) Wisdom of observation.

Actually, the 'Wisdom of letters' is nothing but the teachings on this *sūtra*, while the other two Wisdoms are the essence. So, to describe the main purport of this *sūtra*, it is desirable to make a division into three essential points:

- (1) Describing Wisdom inherent in all sentient beings
- (2) Describing Wisdom of observation
- (3) Describing these two kinds of Wisdom simultaneously.



## 1. Describing the Wisdom inherent in all sentient beings

Firstly, in describing the aspect of Wisdom inherent in all sentient beings, there is a difference of opinions about the ‘real state of all elements’.<sup>10</sup> One position regards ‘the existence which arises from dependent origination’, as having no permanent independent nature of ‘existence which is produced from imagination’, and that *tathatā* (suchness) which comes out of it is the real state, because ‘the existence which arises from dependent origination’ is not vacant. The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* (100 fascicle treatise by Maitreya) says, “If we regard an aspect of consciousness, constructed from the ‘name and word seeds’, as having its Own nature by *rūpa* (matter) and so forth, we should know that its Own nature by *rūpa* and the like has no an actual object or ultimate truth (*paramārtha*), and that it is nothing but existence which is produced from imagination and so it is temporary existence. If consciousness built by all the ‘name and word seeds’ should be done away with, now that the phenomenon composed of *rūpa* and so on has already excluded the nature of utterances from it, its Own nature has an actual object and absolute truth (*paramārtha*).”

Another opinion holds that ‘existence which arises from dependent origination’ is emptiness, and *tathatā* (Thusness, Suchness) is also emptiness, and this is the real state of all elements. This position also maintains that as form is non-substantial, it cannot be attained, and as the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness, these also cannot be attained. Thus, the real nature of the phenomenal world is also non-substantial, which cannot be attained. Also, on that account the real state of all elements is non-substantial and the unconsciousness of this truth is *avidyā* (Ignorance of the true nature of existence).

A third opinion states that, “existence which arises from dependent origination’ is either ‘Existence’ or ‘Emptiness’, because it is

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<sup>10</sup> All things are truth by themselves. The variety of phenomenal things expresses the real state of the universal and eternal truth.

Existence from the viewpoint of the worldly or temporal truth and also Emptiness from the viewpoint of absolute truth (*paramārtha*). Thus, even if Emptiness is *tathatā* (Suchness), Suchness is not necessarily Emptiness this truth is called the real state of all elements.” And continuing, “Even though, from the viewpoint of worldly truth there is *Karma*-result, from the viewpoint of absolute truth there is no *Karma*-result.” The *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra* also reads that, over the ultimate truth (*paramārtha*), there is no other absolute truth.

The fourth position says, “The Buddha's teachings of the ultimate aspect of truth and secular aspect of truth are nothing but a hypothesis, and they are not the real state. It is not the ultimate but the secular, and it is neither Existence nor Emptiness, and so, this is exactly what the real state of all elements is.” And continuing, “(the secular) attainmentness and (the ultimate) non-attainmentness are equal and are called *aprāptitva* (non-attainmentness), because if anyone who misunderstands the truth conceives of any form in the secular, they would also believe that there is form in the ultimate.”

Question: Which of the above views of the four patriarchs is true?

Answer: The above four views are all true, because as their views are all based on the teachings of the Buddha they are not contradictory to one another. Since the real state of noumenon is beyond words and intellection, it cannot be described as true or untrue. A *ten-fascicle commentary on the Ta-cheng-chi-hsin-lun* says, “(1) All things of this world are substantial, (2) all things of this world are non-substantial, (3) all things of this world are both substantial and non-substantial, and (4) all things of this world are neither substantial nor non-substantial.” These views are the real state of all elements.

Considering the above four statements, it is possible to compare them with the four patriarchs' views above, from the standpoint of the real state of all elements. If we have no attachment whatever to the above four phrases and views, we will find that they are reasonable. However, if we have any attachment to them, we cannot help but grasp them literally, and so they will appear to be contradictory to each other, destroying each other, and thus, cannot become the real state of

noumenon. If we could grasp them with transcendental wisdom, they would become the real state of noumenon. A stanza of the *Patriarchs' Treatises* illustrates this:

It's wrong to describe it as Existence or Non-existence.

For all sorts of contentions pass away in the absence of sensation.

If you were to arouse suspicion, you could not grasp the meaning.

Someone says that, on the basis of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, *tathāgata-garbha*<sup>11</sup> is no other than the 'prajñā' inherent in all sentient beings. One section of the *sūtra* depicting the occult truth says, "Then the World-honoured One delivered a discourse on *prajñāpāramitā* concerning *tathāgata-garbha*, Buddha-nature in all sentient beings for all *bodhisattvas*. His discourse caused the *tathāgata-garbha* to pervade all sentient beings so that they received the teachings of the Buddha. 'In other words, as all sentient beings possess *tathāgata-garbha*, which is noumenon of all things, *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva*<sup>12</sup> can pervade all sentient beings. As all sentient beings possess *vajra-garbha* (the storehouse of diamond), it can cleanse the vertexes of all sentient beings. Since all sentient beings have the storehouse of the True Law, they can be transformed by virtue of reasonable words. Since all sentient beings have the storehouse of occult *karma*, they can take the necessary steps preparatory to eliminating illusions.' Thus, after the Lord finished the discourse on the storehouse of the True Law, Buddha said to *Vajra-sattva*, 'If you would listen to, believe in, understand, and take up the teachings of the *Great Wisdom sūtra*, bear them in mind, recite and study them, and also practice them, you could soon be well

11 The *tathāgata*-nature or Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings: According to some schools of Buddhism, the mind is essentially pure and identical with that of the Buddha, although it may be obscured by illusion. When the illusion is removed, the pure mind shines forth and perfect enlightenment is achieved.

12 *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva*: He typifies the teaching, meditation, and practice of the Buddha. He is the right-hand attendant of Śākyamuni Buddha, mounted on a white elephant. He is usually contrasted with Mañjuśrī, who stands for knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment of the Buddha.

versed in *prajñāpāramitā* and simultaneously could attain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.”

In the *Rātnagotra-vibhāgo Mahāyānottaratantra-sāstra*<sup>13</sup> a verse says, “The real nature of the phenomenal world (*dharmatā*) without origin, becomes a support of all *dharmatā*. By virtue of *dharmatā* there are the six worlds<sup>14</sup> and in accordance with it we can attain *nirvāṇa*, which can be reached by extinguishing all illusions and destroying all *karman*, which is the cause of rebirth.” What does the above verse mean? The real nature of *dharmatā* without origin means that, in the *sūtra*, ‘In accordance with *tathāgata-garbha* (Buddha-nature), all the Buddhas perceive that the aspect of non-substantiality without origin in all sentient beings is unobtainable, when it is seen through the real wisdom (*prajñā*).’

In the *Śrīmālā-simha-nāda-sūtra*,<sup>15</sup> the original state of phenomena is described like this: “World-honoured One, *tathāgata-garbha* (the Storehouse of Buddha-nature) is no other than (a) the Storehouse of the True Law, (b) the Storehouse of *dharmakāya* (the absolute nature of the Buddha-mind) which transcends the phenomenal world, (c) the Best Storehouse that transcends the phenomenal world, (d) the innately pure Storehouse of *dharmakāya*, and (e) the innately pure *tathāgata-garbha*.”

In the *She-ta-cheng-lun* and *Treatise on the Buddha-nature*, the above five phrases have five kinds of meanings, which say that all phenomena and forms of existence of this world have no substance. These treatises describe ‘*tathatā* (the pure nature of all beings)’ in detail, as having five meanings:

- 1) The meaning of the kinds of *tathatā*
- 2) The meaning of cause
- 3) The meaning of appearance

13 The *Chiu-ching-i-cheng-pao-hsing-lun*: A four-fascicle work by Saramati (堅意, C. Chien-i). It consists of eleven chapters. The work deals in detail with the *tathāgata-garbha*.

14 The six worlds in which the souls of living beings transmigrate from one to another: (1) hell (2) the worlds of hungry spirits (3) animals (4) asuras (5) men (6) heaven.

15 The *Shng-man-ching*: This *sūtra* transmits the teachings of one vehicle and the *tathāgata-garbha*. It has fifteen chapters, and is addressed to a pious Queen, Śrīmālā.

- 4) The meaning of non-destruction (*athanasia*, 不壞)
- 5) The meaning of secret

Now, what this *sūtra* means is that, as all sentient beings have *tathāgata-garbha* which is noumenon of all things, *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva*, who typifies the teaching, meditation, and practice of the Buddha, can pervade all sentient beings. Therefore *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva* perceives that all sentient beings are nothing but *dharmadhātu* (the realm of cosmic law), and that all sentient beings cannot be in existence separately because the *dharmadhātu* is one, and all phenomena therein are interdependent. For that reason the *bodhisattva*, having obtained thorough training over a long while, and having transformed his mind so that it has pervaded all sentient beings, in the end he himself is all sentient beings. When the *bodhisattva* contemplates his mind to the best of his ability the result is so splendid like this, how glorious it would be if all the Buddhas opened the gateway to observation of the mind with their whole heart. Accordingly, this *sūtra* says that since all sentient beings contain *tathāgata-garbha*, we can say that Buddha-nature is inherent in all sentient beings.

*The Treatise on Buddha-nature* (佛性論, C. Fo-hsing-lun) says that all sentient beings exist in the Wisdom of *tathatā* which is joined with the *tathatā*, hence, they can be joined also with the *tathatā* whatever is joined with the *tathatā* is no more than *tathāgata-garbha*.

What does it mean that *vajra-garbha* can cleanse the vertexes of all sentient beings? It means that the great perfect mirror-wisdom, which *samyak-sambuddha* (the perfectly Enlightened One) possesses, perfumes, practices, and transforms the seeds of *avidyā* in all sentient beings, causing them to attain the *niṣyanda-phala*.<sup>16</sup>

The transformation by right speech (*sammā-vācā*) means that when *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva*, who typifies the teaching, meditation, and practice of the Buddha, preaches a sermon, his right speech influences

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<sup>16</sup> One of the fivefold aspects of effect: *Nisyanda-phala*, the cause and its effect resemble each other.

and transforms the seeds of *avidyā* into the righteous law, in all sentient beings.

What does it mean that all sentient beings possess the storehouse of occult *karma*? It means that the power, perfumed and practiced by *tathāgata-garbha* (the Storehouse of Buddha-nature), makes all sentient beings generate two kinds of *karma*. The two kinds of *karma*, that is, the *karma* which avoids suffering (*duḥkha*) and the *karma* which seeks pleasure (*sukha*), is the mind that makes effort to do good things. These two kinds of *karma* result in possessing the Storehouse of occult *karma*, which is based on taking the necessary steps preparatory to eliminating illusions thus, we can call it the Wondrous *Karma*.

## 2. Describing the Wisdom of Observation

In describing the aspect of the Wisdom of Observation, the treatise reads, “When all *bodhisattvas* for the first time resolve to attain the supreme enlightenment, and try to attain the wisdom of the Buddha at the same time, meanwhile, they come to perceive the real state of all elements. This wisdom which they attain we call *prajñāpāramitā*.” Generally speaking, that may be true, but there are various opinions on *prajñāpāramitā* which are illustrated in the following passages:

1) Someone says that wisdom without illusion is the aspect of *prajñāpāramitā*, because among all types of wisdom the first one is *prajñāpāramitā*, and also, the wisdom free from any taint of illusion (the wisdom of the Buddha) is supreme.

2) Another says that *prajñāpāramitā* is wisdom with illusion because even though a *bodhisattva* possesses great wisdom and heaps of virtue, he has still not eliminated all illusions completely before he attains *Bodhi-druma* (*pippala*) and removes both binding and driving under the tree.

3) And a third says that, both *bodhisattva* wisdom without illusion and wisdom with illusion are *prajñāpāramitā*. Because, now that he not only observes *nirvāṇa* but also practices the way to Buddhahood, his

wisdom may be called wisdom without illusion, and at the same time, since he still has not attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* completely, his wisdom may be also called wisdom with illusion.

4) The fourth opinion says *prajñāpāramitā* is the form which cannot be grasped, because all of existence, non-existence, impermanence, *śūnyatā* (emptiness), and ultimate existence are *prajñāpāramitā*. Also, *prajñāpāramitā* belongs to neither the eighteen worlds nor the twelve sense-fields. In *prajñāpāramitā* there is no *dharma*, nor that which is unlawful, no attachment, no impartiality, no appearance, no disappearance, and it is also beyond 'the four phrases and one-hundred negations' such as existence or non-existence and so on. And so nothing is attached. To use a metaphor, just as it is impossible for us to come into contact with flames raging from all directions as it will burn us, so it is impossible to get to *prajñāpāramitā*, because it is beyond words and intellection and it also burns wrong views.

Question: Which is the truest among the above opinions on *prajñāpāramitā*?

Answer: Each of them is true because they all have their own principles. In the *sūtra*, when some 500 *bhikṣus* depicted the two extremes of existence and non-existence, as well as the path between two extremes, the Buddha admitted that they are all right because they all have their own principles.

There is one opinion that maintains that this last opinion is most true, because they each cannot destroy one another. If we insist that there is something trivial it would be destroyed, because it possesses defect. If we insist that there is nothing trivial, it would also be destroyed, because it cannot but possess fault. In the *prajñāpāramitā*, existence is nothingness, nothingness is also nothingness, non-existence and non-emptiness are also nothingness these phrases are also nothingness, and now what is being stated is also nothingness. We say 'nothing to cling to'<sup>17</sup> is the *dharma* that has transcended birth and annihilation, having no hindrance in regard to enlightenment and

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<sup>17</sup> Nothing to cling to: A term used by Hui-neung to indicate the lack of substance in all things; it stems from the doctrine of *śūnyatā* in the *prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

beyond unprofitable words. Thus, since it cannot be destroyed by anything else, it can be named the supreme, true, and faultless *prajñāpāramitā*. Just as *cakravartī-śakra* does not behave haughtily to his inferiors after he has caused the enemy to surrender, so the *prajñāpāramitā* beyond unprofitable words doesn't pretend to destroy anything else. In the *Great Wisdom sūtra*, part 1, volume 11, unit 3 shows that the unobtainable existence is no more than the ultimate existence of the middle path.

Generally speaking, it seems that the above three opinions express the real state of all things, by some traces and means. In other words, both the *prajñā* of the *bodhisattva* prior to the ten stages of developing the Buddha-wisdom, and the *prajñā* of the *bodhisattva* above the ten stages, have been described as cases according to wisdom with illusion or wisdom without illusion.

The fourth opinion only points to the wisdom without discrimination of the *bodhisattva* above the ten stages, and thus, it has already obtained the ultimate existence and is beyond unprofitable words and intellection, as well as being beyond the four phrases and it also avoids the five aspects concerning the five sorts of meanings on *tathatā*. Accordingly, it is said that the last opinion reveals the ultimate existence. While the last one is the best, it does not connote all the wisdom of the Buddha. Therefore it can be said that each of the above four opinions have real substance. For this reason, it is said that *prajñāpāramitā* connotes all the wisdom of the Buddha; when a *bodhisattva* would search for the path of teachings outlined by the Buddha, he should learn all the path of teachings and attain all the wisdom of the Buddha, just as *śrāvaka*<sup>18</sup> and *pratyeka-buddha*<sup>19</sup> seek the wisdom of the Buddha. There are three kinds of Buddha wisdom: (a) those who need religious training (*śaikṣa*, 學) (b) those who no longer need religious training (*arhat*) (c) neither *śaikṣa* nor *arhat*. The wisdom of the Buddha which is neither *śaikṣa* nor *arhat* is: imperfect wisdom such as *aubha-bhavana* (不淨)<sup>20</sup> and *ānāpāna* (數息),<sup>21</sup> the four types of meditation

18 Those who listen to the Buddha's teaching and attain enlightenment.

19 A self-enlightened Buddha



which eliminate false views that belong to the world of desire (*kāma-dhātu*), and the four kinds of stages of preparation in which one takes the necessary steps to begin eliminating illusion, etc.

### 3. Describing these two kinds of Wisdom simultaneously

When we endeavor to describe these two kinds of Wisdom at the same time, although we provisionally describe two kinds of wisdom, as it is impossible to depict it as one, if we could eliminate active and passive elements, in the long run we would perceive that these two kinds of Wisdom are not different from each other. Because when the *bodhisattvas* practice the *prajñāpāramitā*, although they seek the real state of all elements, since nothing is to be attained among all elements such as *ātman* or *anātman*, the eternal or impermanence, appearance or disappearance, existence or *sūnyatā*, and there is no aspect of all elements concerning noumenon and phenomenon which can be grasped, it is natural that the *bodhisattvas* do not take any subjective view of *prajñāpāramitā*. (Since all phenomena are produced by causation, their character is that of *sūnyatā* and so it cannot be grasped.)

Such being the case, there is no aspect of all elements to be attained and there is no subjective view of *prajñā*. Therefore, when the *bodhisattvas* contemplate the real state of all elements without discrimination, there are neither two nor is there difference, neither beginning nor end, neither appearance nor disappearance, and neither existence nor *sūnyatā* (emptiness). Accordingly, as absolute reality is beyond words and intellection, and is also beyond the reach of mental activity, how can there be two kinds of wisdom in *prajñā*? Since all things of noumenon and phenomenon are none other than the same, we can say it is the real state of all elements, and as *prajñā* has transcended all discrimination, we can say it is the 'wisdom of

20 Contemplation of the inherent impurity of objects. The way of forsaking afflictions by contemplating the impurity of the body. There are two kinds: (1) nine meditations by which one contemplates the impurities of one's own body, and (2) five meditations by which one contemplates the impurities of another's body.

21 Harmonious breathing. Rhythmic inhaling and exhaling during sitting meditation.

non-discrimination'. Therefore, *prajñā* is none other than absolute reality and absolute reality is none other than *prajñā*. On that account the treatise says, "When the *bodhisattvas* contemplate the real state of all elements, they not only regard it as neither eternal nor impermanence, neither *ātman* nor *anātman*, and neither existence nor non-existence, but also they do not regard it as such. Thus the *bodhisattvas* practice *prajñāpāramitā* in that way. This means that the *prajñā* is inherently beyond all contemplation, all words, all mental activity, appearance and disappearance. It takes after the aspect of *nirvāṇa* and also after the phenomenal things and so it is called 'the real state of all elements.'"

Question: Are there three kinds in the wisdom of observation? If there should be a function of consciousness which perceives the image of an object in it, how can you say that there is no 'path of insight'? And if there is no consciousness which perceives the image of an object, how can you call it the wisdom of observation? If there should be the function of consciousness which corroborates the workings of the image of an object and also it can perceive itself, the essence of *prajñā* cannot be the same as the real state of all things. In this case how can you say it neither two nor is there difference? If there should be neither a function of consciousness which perceives the image of an object in it, nor function of consciousness which corroborates the workings of the image of an object in it, it would be the same as empty space, and so it could not be called *prajñā*.

Answer: Someone says, "This *prajñā* has a function of consciousness which perceives the image of an object, but it does not have the image of an object which appears within consciousness." And another says, "This wisdom has neither the image of an object which appears within consciousness nor the function of consciousness which perceives the image of an object, but it has only the function of consciousness which corroborates the workings of the image of an object and so at the same time the *prajñā* perceives itself." If anyone else insists that the above three should be viewed separately, we may as well say that the above three cannot exist. If anyone else insists that the above three should have no difference, we do well to say

provisionally, that the above three exist simultaneously.

Since the *prajñā* itself has transcended all forms and views, it cannot but be equal. In the equality about *prajñā*, the form of *prajñā* is no other than what has no form, and the view of *prajñā* is also no other than what has no view, and also, even though *prajñā* does not have the function of consciousness which corroborates the workings of the image of an object separately, it cannot exist without function. In this way, function cannot exist without being perceived, because the essence of all things has nothing other than function. Therefore, it follows that function is none other than view and those who see form have no real insight because those who see any form cannot perceive the essence of all things.

Such being the case, the function of consciousness which perceives the image of an object in *prajñā*, is none other than the essence of all things, since this function does not make any false form and view. Accordingly, the above three can be nothing other than all one.

If you could realize and preach that there is no hindrance between existence and non-existence, you would attain the state of enlightenment (*nirvāna*). If you should think that all phenomena exist, you would slip into the extreme of existence, and if you should think that all phenomena lack any real existence, you would slip into the extreme of non-existence. If you could not eliminate these two extremes of existence and non-existence, you would be placed under restraint. There is a stanza to this effect:

If someone should see *prajñā*,  
 he would be placed under restraint.  
 If someone should not see *prajñā*,  
 he would also be placed under restraint.<sup>22</sup>

If someone could see *prajñā*,  
 he would attain *nirvāna*

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<sup>22</sup> From the side of the secular aspect of truth which slips into the two extremes of existence and non-existence.

If someone could not see *prajñā*,  
he would also attain *nirvāṇa*.<sup>23</sup>

This is the end of Chapter 2: Depicting the main purport of this *sūtra*.

### Glossary of Chinese Terms

(K=Korean, C=Chinese, J=Japanese, S=Sanskrit, P=Pali)

- Anapana (S) 數息  
 Anuttara-samyak-sam-bodhi (S) 無上正等正覺  
 Aprāptitva (S) 無得  
 Arhat (S) 阿羅漢  
 Athanasia (S), Pu-Huai (C) 不懷  
 Aubha-Bhavana (S) 不淨  
 Bhiksus (S) 比丘  
 Bodhisattva (S) 菩薩  
 Chiu-ching-i-cheng-pao-hsing-lun (C) 究竟一乘寶性論  
 Chongyo (K), Tzung-yao (C) 宗要  
 Chu-fa-shih-hsiang (C) 諸法實相  
 Confucius (C) 孔子  
 Dahuidu (C), Mahāprajñāpāramitā (S) 大慧度  
 Dharma-dhatu (S), Fa-chieh (C) 法界  
 Dharma-kaya (S) 法身  
 Duhkha (S) 苦  
 Fo-hsing-lun (C) 佛性論  
 Han'guk sasang sa (K) 韓國思想史  
 Hap (K) 合  
 Hsüan-tsang (C) 玄奘  
 Kae (K) 開  
 Karma (S) 業  
 Kim yong-pyo (K) 金容彪

<sup>23</sup> From the side of the ultimate aspect of truth which transcends the two extremes of existence and non-existence.

- Kuan-chao-po-je (C) 觀照波若  
Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra (S) 大般若波羅蜜多經  
Mou-igi-ten-tou-mmku-roku (J) 東域傳燈目錄  
Paramārtha (S), Shêng-i (C) 勝義  
Pāramitā (S) 到彼岸  
Po-je (C) 波若 (般若)  
Prajñā (S) 般若  
Prajñāpti (S) 假名  
Pratyekabuddha (S), P'i-chih-fo (C) 辟支佛, 緣覺  
Sadapralapa (S) 常啼  
Saiksa (S) 學  
Samantabhadra-bodhisattva (S) 普賢菩薩  
Samma-vaca (S) 正語  
Saramati (S), Chien-i 堅意  
She-ta-cheng-lun (C) 攝大乘論  
Shih-hsiang (C) 實相  
Shih-hsiang-po-je (C) 實相波若  
Shinpunjehonggyochangchongrok (K) 新編諸宗教藏總錄  
Shun (C) 舜  
Sravaka (S), Shêng-wên (C) 聲聞  
Srimala-simha-nada Sūtra (C) 勝鬘經  
Sukha (S) 樂  
Śūnyatā (S) 空性  
Ta-cheng-chi-hsin-lun (C) 大乘起信論  
Taehyedogyongchongyo (K), Ta-hui-tu-ching (C) 大慧度經宗要  
Ta-hui-tu (C) 大慧度  
Ta-hui-tu-ching (C) 大慧度經  
Tathatā (S) 如如  
Thāgata-garbha (S) 如來藏  
Uich'on (K) 義天  
Vajra-garbha (S) 金剛藏  
Wōnhyo (K) 元曉  
Yao (C) 堯  
Yü-ch'ieh-lun (C) 瑜伽論

Zhou (C) 周公

## Abbreviations

- HPC *Han'guk-pulgyo-chunseo* (韓國佛教全書; Complete Works of Korean Buddhism). Seoul: Dongguk Univ. Press.
- T *Taishyō-shinsy-daizōkyō* (大正新修大藏經; Japanese Edition of Chinese *Tripitaka*). Tōkyō: Taishō-Issaikyō-Kankōkai.

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