

Cultivating Original Enlightenment: Wohnyo's Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-Sutra (Kumgang Sammaegyong Non)

Wönhyo

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Wonhyo (617-686) is the dominant figure in the history of Korean Buddhism and one of the most influential thinkers in the Korean philosophical tradition. Koreans know Wonhyo in his various roles as Buddhist mystic, miracle worker, social iconoclast, religious proselytist, and cultural hero. Above all else, Wonhyo was an innovative thinker and prolific writer, whose works cover the gamut of Indian and Sinitic Buddhist materials: Some one hundred treatises and commentaries are attributed to him, twenty-three of which are extant today. Wonhyo's importance is not limited to the peninsula, however. His writings were widely read in China and japan, and his influence on the overall development of East Asian Mahayana thought is significant, particularly in relation to the Huayan, Chan, and Pure Land schools. In "Cultivating Original Enlightenment", the first volume in The International Association of Wonhyo Studies' "Collected Works of Wonhyo" series, Robert E. Buswell Jr. translates Wonhyo's longest and culminating work, the "Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi-Sutra" ("Kumgang Sammaegyong Non"). Wonhyo here brings to bear all the tools acquired throughout a lifetime of scholarship and meditation to the explication of a scripture that has a startling connection to the Korean Buddhist tradition. In his treatise, Wonhyo examines the crucial question of how enlightenment can be turned from a tantalizing prospect into a palpable reality that manifests itself in all activities.



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