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Donghak and sacramental commons: Eastern learning, creation consciousness, and Korean socioecological ethics

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DONGHAK AND SACRAMENTAL COMMONS: EASTERN LEARNING, CREATION CONSCIOUSNESS, AND KOREAN SOCIOECOLOGICAL ETHICS

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God will always make a way out of no way.

DONGHAK AND SACRAMENTAL COMMONS: EASTERN LEARNING, CREATION CONSCIOUSNESS, AND KOREAN SOCIOECOLOGICAL ETHICS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to construct a Korean socioecological ethics based on comparative studies of the Eastern indigenous ecological spirituality of *Donghak* and the Western creation consciousness of *sacramental commons*. As this thesis examines the significant similarity between *Donghak* (initiated by 수운, Su-woon) and sacramental commons (elaborated by John Hart), it highlights their common socioecological understandings of "interrelatedness," "interdependence," "interaction," and "transformation."

In the nineteenth century, before the intrusion of Western modernization into traditional Korean society, *Donghak*'s revolutionary egalitarian thinking included liberating and empowering *minjung*, the common people. *Donghak*'s radical ideas are

precursors of socioecological concepts; its social consciousness has affected contemporary Korean ecological spirituality. By virtue of *Donghak*'s spirituality and consciousness, Korean socioecological ethics might overcome the harm of Western anthropocentric influences.

This project envisions a utopian socioecological community and a versatile pedagogical program as a socioecological project in Korean contexts. Although Koreans have experienced a conflict between traditional value systems and Western imported ideologies, eco-community movements have been developed that integrate them. These movements emphasize participation, solidarity, and responsibility for local communities, and aim to change daily life through a transformation of cultural consciousness and contextual conduct.

The methodological significance of this dissertation lies in the interreligious and transcultural dialogue between *Donghak* and sacramental commons. Elements of comparative socioecological ethics—themes of "relational community," "relational consciousness," and "interconnectedness"—in both *Donghak* and sacramental commons reveal their shared, holistic understanding of a socio-ethical relationship among the divine Spirit, humans, and nature. These comparative constructs suggest how socioecological ethics can restore socioecological relationality to a dynamic unity of the divine and the earthly, the infinite and the finite, transcendence and immanence, universality and particularity, and individuality and diversity.

Donghak and sacramental commons emphasize relational socioecological consciousness, the role of divine Spirit, and the importance of practice and projects based

on this holistic understanding. Their common creation consciousness can provide a shared socioecological vision and have a transformative role in Korean contexts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The global scale of the ecological crisis which is destroying planet Earth requires the united measures and efforts of East and West to formulate a common socioecological ethics. An ecological problem is global not only because it endangers the entire world but also because its solution depends upon substantial efforts from peoples of the whole planet. This problem is a challenge to humankind and every single organism. Today it is necessary to wake up in people the feeling of unity with nature and other people, the feeling of participation in everything which transpires on Earth.

Any exploration of the nature of divine reality and the reality of the natural realm, within the horizon of eco-ethical discourse is likely, at some point, to touch on Benedict Spinoza's apparent identification of God and nature: *Deus sive Natura*. This slogan of pantheism suggests the two terms refer equally to, or name, the same thing - "God" or "Nature": it amounts to being the same either way. God is not other than the natural world; the natural world is whatever God is. But pantheistic reductionism is inadequate to the contemporary challenge of Christian ecological ethics. Here, as the term itself implies, the very notion of the Divine is juxtaposed with a dynamic relational understanding of material reality.

Ecology understands nature to be profoundly interactive, dynamic, relational, and interconnected. God-talk and ecology-speak fuse at the interface of concern with the

world and the idea of a relating God who acts within the natural world. And this, of course, begs the question of the nature of deity as much as, if not more so than, any notion of the "divinity" of nature. Unless there is a coherent conception of deity that can combine within itself and so, conceptually as it were, cope with both spiritual and earthly concerns so as to bridge the divide between them rather than see one subsumed within the other, then the possibility of a genuine Christian ethical advance will lapse. We will end with some kind of "echo" – Christian ethics: the ideological patterns and Christian ethical constraints of an outmoded way of thinking will triumph, at the cost of a deep theological understanding and articulation of the reality of God, and the God-World relation implied thereby.

If an ethics intends to be ecologically relevant, it has to have its own voices regarding socio-political situations. For example, in Korean contexts where the ethics and practice of the churches have been quite separated from the actual lives of society and politics, an ethics has to be challenged to be reconstructed in the directions that it plays its own practical meaning in terms of the issues with which people are struggling. This constructive work is planned to be a proposal of socioecological ethics for the churches as well as religious people who are sincerely concerned about nature on the Korean peninsula. In fact, the ecological crisis has been one of the most serious concerns for the lives of people in Korea. In particular, the people in South Korea are called to participate in efforts to protect and preserve their country from ecological destruction.

In Korea ecological concerns have hardly penetrated the consciousness of modern religions, including Christianity. The project of socioecological spiritual reconfiguration

has not been considered seriously in the concrete circumstances of Korean daily life. The new global ecological challenge, however, calls us far beyond recycling, a few prayers for Earth in worship services, turning the church garden into a bird sanctuary, or talking occasionally about a relational ethic that includes the planet. If we take the challenge seriously, it will cut to the roots of our religious consciousness and conduct. Specifically, it will ask how Korean Christianity can become a more nature-conscious, nature-related, and nature-integrated religion.

Can socio-ethical reflection discover in Korean religious tradition and Christian sacramentality a commonplace to build groundwork for dedicated ecological action? This question is one of Christian social ethics' most important contemporary challenges in Korean contexts, especially in view of well-known accusations that Christianity is itself in some way responsible for our ecological neglect. Such a serious indictment forces us to ask whether Christian social ethics can demonstrate an essential connection between Korean *Donghak*[1] thought and Christian sacramentality. How can Christian faith provide a vision that can move us to a firm and permanent commitment to ecological responsibility in Korean society? These kinds of ethical questions complement the

[1] *Donghak* (東學, 동학), which literally means "Eastern Learning," is the first Korean indigenous religion that is mainly focused on socio-religious movement. It was founded by Je-Woo Choi (pen name, Su-woon) in 1860 and had an enormous impact on the events in the waning days of the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910) and the dawn of modern Korea. Having spent his adult life in search for the truth through Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Catholicism, Su-woon could not find the way to reach the ultimate religious authority. His personal religious experience convinced him that none of the existing religions were sufficient for human to find the truth or salvation. Su-woon's conversations with *Hanulnim* (한울님, God) were revolutionary events for a Confucian scholar, since they enabled him to ignore the established channels of existing religions to make direct contact the "ultimate authority." He came to believe that *Hanulnim* is immediately accessible to human, any man or woman, and that every human being is immediately in touch with *Hanulnim*.

ecological spirituality of *Shi Chonju* (侍天主, 시천주) that is the main idea of the *Donghak* philosophy and movement. I understand this concept to be closely related to John Hart's idea of a "sacramental commons."

Korean *Donghak* thought sees the root of ecological catastrophe as a crisis of consciousness and conduct, as does the concept of a sacramental commons. The second sage of *Donghak*, Si-Hyung Choi (pen name, Haewol), elaborated *Donghak* thoughts and organized the *Donghak* movement systematically.[2] Most importantly, Haewol furthered the core idea of the relation between God and human in *Donghak*, *Innaechon* (人乃天, 인내천, God is in Humans).[3] He introduced the concept of *Samkyong* (三敬, 삼경, Honor God, human, and nature as a whole), meaning that every human and nature has God's original energy within, and should be respected or revered.[4] Integrating the *Donghak* and sacramental commons perspectives will contribute to formulating innovative ecological principles and practices in contemporary Korean contexts. The concept of sacramental commons plays a role as a critical hermeneutical tool for the project because the idea of *Donghak* needs to be re-contextualized in this social and cultural location.

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[2] No-Bin Yun, *Donghak Sasangkwa Donghak Hyongmyong* (Donghak Thought and Donghak Revolution) (Seoul: Chong-a Publishers, 1989), 139.

[3] There is a similarity in perspective of Haewol and Christian martyr St. Maximus (580-662). Maximus taught theologically that God is present in all beings in a *Logos-logoi* relationship; everything has, as it were, sparks from a divine flame. It gives us a close relationship between Donghak and Christianity in the similarity of the doctrines that emerged in the early years and tradition of both.

[4] Mun-hwan Oh, *Sarami Hanulida* (Humanity is Heaven) (Seoul: Sol, 1996), 125-130.

Significance of the Study

The ecological challenge calls for new reflection on Christian ethics. While there are several good books on Christian ecological ethics, Western[5] churches have written few major documents, statements, or encyclicals on the topic. Much of the literature dealing with ecological issues focuses on texts, rather than contexts. In some ways this lack of documentation may be a blessing. A truly serious Christian ethic on the environment should follow from the experiential living of an ecological spirituality in daily life. Otherwise there will be a tendency to write an abstract set of principles and applications that do not derive from our own deeply felt participation in the natural world. We first need to become porous to the sacred in nature; we need to dwell holistically on Earth, letting its creatures reveal their needs to us. To be in dialogue with nature in this mode, we will have to listen carefully to Earth's voices, re-personalizing nature[6] as a conversation partner after such a long period of de-sacralizing and de-personalizing it.

Global ecological challenges raise many kinds of moral questions for religious ethicists, involving obligations to the conservation of community, duties toward the general public, and particular responsibilities in distinct contexts. Given the diversity and multi-dimensional nature of these sorts of ethical issues, no single tradition in ethical theory or applied ethics can address adequately the multiple responsibilities and duties

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[5] This has not been the case in Eastern Christianity. Currently, the most obvious example of ecological concern is expressed by the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, who is known as the "Green Patriarch" in his church and beyond.

[6]Oxford theologian, Anglican priest, and scientist Alister McGrath calls for a 'reenchantment' of creation in *The Reenchantment of Nature—The Denial of Religion and the Ecological Crisis* (NY: Doubleday, 2002). He faults the European Enlightenment for the desacralization and mechanization of nature.

that must be considered in such morally and scientifically complicated decision-making situations. The complexity of these cases poses a challenge to many of the conventional approaches within ethical theory and applied ethics. This is especially true for those projects in which a single moral principle or underlying moral philosophy is defended as being universally applicable, a stance referred to as "moral monism."[7] Ecological ethicists, however, may face situations that stretch any single "off-the-rack" ethical theory (and even the Western moral philosophical tradition as a whole) beyond the breaking point.[8]

For example, much of traditional ethical theory is premised on the experiences or attributes of the individual human, whether focused on promoting good consequences for all those affected by an act or rule, or on recognizing duties or obligations to respect certain values or rights independent of the consequences.[9] As a result, these principles are not easily or coherently extended to maintaining the health or integrity of natural collectives such as whole ecological systems. On the other hand, even though ecological ethics has occasionally focused on philosophical issues and practical conflicts within ecological research or conservation practice, it has in general been more preoccupied with abstract discussions of ecological value theory.[10] The field's strong theoretical

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[7] Christopher Stone, *Earth and other Ethics: The Case for Moral Pluralism* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1987), 8.

[8] Ibid., 11.

[9] Ibid., 16.

[10] Holmes Rolston, III., "In situ and ex situ Conservation: Philosophical and Ethical Concerns." In Edward O. Guerrant Jr., Kayri Havens, and Mike Maunder, eds., *Ex situ Plant Conservation: Supporting Species in the Wild* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004), 87.

orientation, in other words, has rendered it incapable of offering much practical assistance to sociologists and religious ethicists in their deliberations and decision-making when confronted by ethical dilemmas in their work.

Moreover, ecological ethicists have traditionally been most concerned with ecological wholes, such as wild species and ecosystems, in their work, a philosophical bias that has led many in the field to ignore issues having to do primarily with the welfare of individual animals.[11] Ecological ethicists have also shown little interest in the human or "anthropic" dimensions of ecological attitudes and practices, preferring instead to defend a nature-centered or "non-anthropocentric" ethical stance.[12] As a result, the field of ecological ethics–at least as it is currently configured–does not provide the kind of inclusive ethical accounting that is proposed here, namely the identification and appraisal of the ecological, animal, and human (professional and welfare-regarding) values at play in problematic research and management situations. Consequently, a more philosophically pluralistic, interdisciplinary, and integrative practical ethical approach is needed.

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[11] Eugene C. Hargrove ed., *The Animal Rights/ Environmental Ethics Debate: The Environmental Perspective* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 21.

[12] Ben A. Minteer, "Environmental Philosophy and the Public Interest: A Pragmatic Reconciliation." *Environmental Values* (14: 37-60, 2005), 8.

Sources of the Study

Sacramental Commons of John Hart

John Hart affirms that sacramental moments are experiences of the loving and creative presence of the Spirit. Creation flows from divine vision and is the locus of the human experience of divine presence. For him, people perceive signs of the Spirit in creation, signs that might or might not be acknowledged but which nonetheless link innermost human being with divine Being.[13] People have moments of engagement with the Spirit when they are open to the loving and creative presence of the Spirit in creation.

In Christian churches, Hart explains that sacraments traditionally have been religious rituals, mediated by a member of the clergy in a dedicated, human-constructed sacred space, which are visible signs or symbols of an invisible experience of God's grace in significant life moments.[14] For some, pristine places also have come to be viewed as sacramental because they reveal the Spirit's loving creativity in their biodiversity, textured topography, and provision of food, water and shelter for the community of life.[15]

As Hart comments, the term "sacrament" in the Catholic Church usually is applied to seven church rituals, presided over by a priest in a church building.[16] These rituals, derived from teachings and actions of Jesus, were formalized by the Council of

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[13] John Hart, *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), xiv.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., xv.

[16] Ibid.

Trent (1547-1563). There have been exceptions to this reserved use of the term. For example, the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium* called the Church a "sacrament"; and Pope Paul VI stated that "the poor are a sacrament of Christ," a theological expression of the teaching of Jesus in the Last Judgment story in Matthew's gospel (25:31-46).[17]

As Hart points out, in 1991 the U.S. bishops, in their national pastoral letter *Renewing the Earth*, said that creation as a whole is sacramental. They declared that "The Christian vision of a sacramental universe – a world that discloses the Creator's presence by visible and tangible signs – can contribute to making the earth a home for the human family once again."[18] The bishops of Alberta, Canada, in their 1998 pastoral letter *Celebrate Life: Care for Creation*, taught "Catholics see creation in a sacramental way. The abundance and beauty of God's creation reveals to us something of the generosity of the Creator. God is present and speaks in the dynamic life forces of our universe and planet as well as in our own lives. Respect for life needs to include all creation."[19] These church teachings state that the whole of creation can be sacramental for the person of faith, revealing God's grace−offering presence and life−conferring productivity.[20]

For Hart, a sacramental place is naturally a commons: a home shared by all the members of the community of life:

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[17] Ibid.

[18] John Hart, *What are They Saying about Environmental Theology?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 31.

[19] Ibid, 32.

[20] Hart explains that the sacramental universe teaching has scriptural bases in passages such as Wisdom 13:5: "from the greatness and beauty of created things their original author, by analogy, is seen"; and Acts 17:28: "in God we live and move and have our being."

> In it, their food and habitat needs are integrated, their competitive needs are balanced, their relationships are interdependent, and their associations are consciously or unconsciously collaborative. The commons is the locus of engagement of the biotic and abiotic communities, internally in their respective modes of being and engagement and externally in their interaction with each other. The commons is the place in which dynamic natural history evolves, diversifies and complexifies, and the base from which cultural history develops in all its intricacy.[21]

In the bible, human property in land and goods is part of a human commons (Acts 2:44 describes how the early Christian community "had all things in common"), which is to provide for human needs. "In a complementary way, the Earth is a commons: shared space and the source of life-providing goods for all creatures."[22] The Earth commons, then, "is not intended solely for humans' use and enjoyment, although as part of the biotic community they share in its benefits; it is being created to provide for all creatures as they live related to and dependent on each other"[23] in complex ecosystems.

"The sacramental commons is creation seen as the locus of the interactive presence and caring compassion of the Spirit."[24] For Hart, "it implies that people are called to integrate the spiritual meaning of 'sacramental' and the social meaning of 'commons' and engage in concrete efforts to restore and conserve ecosystems: to care

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[21] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 62.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., xviii.

about and care for creation as a whole, and to care about and for the members of the biotic community."[25]

"The 'sacramental universe' becomes localized in the 'sacramental commons'"[26] when "Creator Spirit and created spirits consciously engage each other in sacred space, which is every place in creation. People in their spiritual center experience sacramental moments in sacramental places of a sacramental commons in the sacramental universe."[27] As "sacrament," a place at special moments is revelatory of God-immanent; as "commons," a place at all moments is a sign of the creativity of God-transcendent, while simultaneously providing the natural goods necessary for the well-being of the community of all life.[28] In acknowledging a "sacramental commons," Hart says, "people express an appreciation of the sacredness, integrity, and life-sustaining qualities of creation."[29]

As a socioecological ethicist, Hart believes that ethical conduct and ecological consequences flow from sacramental understandings of cosmos and commons. Christians who acknowledge the creative, communicating and community-creating immanence of the Spirit in creation, recognizing thereby the revelatory power of creation as a whole and of the biotic community within it, treat Earth and Earth's inhabitants with reverence and

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 61.

[27] Ibid., 65.

[28] Ibid., 66.

[29] Ibid.

respect. In understanding that the Spirit intends that Earth's goods meet the needs of all Earth's creatures, they avoid consumerism and exploitation. In viewing creation holistically, they act responsibly toward those who are strangers in space, time and species, not solely the human "neighbors" who have the most noticeable claim on their concern, but also otherkind and pristine nature that comprise the variant forms of the community of creation ever emerging from the creative power and loving presence of the Spirit. Within this consciousness, Hart asserts, "generational and intergenerational responsibility are fostered, the limits on Earth's livable space, productive places, and available goods are respected, and space, places and goods are shared equitably."[30]

Hart presents a compelling vision of the Earth as a commons of divine creativity and human response in interaction with all living and nonliving nature. He denotes "sacraments" as "signs of the creating Spirit that draw people into grace-filled moments permeated by a heightened awareness of divine presence and engagement with divine being."[31] Natural sacraments are places, events, or creatures in nature that simultaneously draw people into relationship with the Spirit and with all living and nonliving creation. The Earth serves as a sacramental commons, a means of grace. One of Hart's key contributions is to affirm that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, works sacramentally not only through the church but also through creation.[32]

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[30] Ibid., 77.

[31] Ibid., xiv.

[32] Ibid., 77.

Hart's idea of sacramental commons represents an achievement of innovative integration. His "creatio-centric consciousness" blends contemporary science, environmental philosophy, biblical and historical theology, Native American spirituality, and socio-political-economic analysis. Hart explores the commonality of nature as a locus for spiritual experience across world religions and spiritual traditions. He notes that some form of responsibility for creation has also been practiced in diverse traditions such as in what *Donghak* has done in Korea. On a practical level, Hart's approach establishes a deep, interreligious moral pull that can be used for the comparative interpretation of Christianity and *Donghak*.

According to Hart, the key to promoting and protecting the sacramental commons is to undergo a "change of consciousness from an anthropocentric domination of nature to a relational interdependence with creation"[33] and then to act accordingly. He seeks to identify the responsibilities human beings have for other creatures. These responsibilities flow from a "relational consciousness respectful of all creatures." This relational consciousness is developed by cultivating an awareness of the sacredness of creation and an awareness of the Earth as the "common ground shared with all life."[34]

Theological bases for the understanding of a "sacramental commons" were developed by Hart in his earliest published work, *The Spirit of the Earth: A Theology of the Land*. He declares that "the earth and all in, on and around the earth are the Creator's…. God became enfleshed on the earth, and experienced first-hand the relation

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[33] Ibid., 117.

[34] Ibid., 203.

of the creature for its Creator…. God contains the finite earth within infinite Being, and so God's Spirit permeates the earth."[35] Hart observes further that "the Spirit of the earth is God, the Great Spirit, the transcendent yet immanent One who created the world, restored its relation to its Creator, and continually renews that relation."[36] The interrelatedness of humans and nature and God in Catholic teachings is similar to *Donghak*'s concept of *Shi-Chonju* as "all creatures in the universe bear God within."

Jürgen Moltmann's God in Creation

Jürgen Moltmann's interreligious dialogue, ecological spirituality, and approach to Eastern religions are also needed as resources to study *Donghak*. His idea of an ecological doctrine of creation in *Gott in der Schöpfung: Ökologische Schöpfungslehre*[37] would play an important role in understanding how *Donghak* and *sacramental commons* are related, and carries forward Hart's ideas as expressed in *The Spirit of the Earth*. Moltmann states: "Die Erkenntnis der Welt als Schöpfung ist nicht Ansichtssache, sondern impliziert einen bestimmten Umgang mit der Welt, der die Existenz des Erkennenden betrifft und der ihn in eine größere Gemeinschaft hineinnimmt."[38] For him,

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[35] John Hart, *The Spirit of the Earth: A Theology of the Land* (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984), 155.

[36] Ibid., 158.

[37] Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, Translated by Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

[38] "The knowledge of the world as creation is not a matter of opinion, but it implies a particular way of dealing with the world which affects the existence of the perceiving person and takes one into a wider community" (my translation).

to include the whole of creation in our reverence for the Creator, the important thing is to rediscover the Creator's immanence in creation, a teaching which is also embedded in the *Donghak* tradition.

It is interesting that Ernst Haeckel, the German biologist who coined the term "ecology," addressed the relation of God and creation. In advocating a "monistic philosophy" in 1899 he wrote, "Pantheism teaches that God and the world are one. The idea of God is identical with that of nature or substance...Pantheism is the world-system of the modern scientist."[39]

Moltmann developed the first full-orbed ecological theology. One of his "guiding ideas" for an ecological doctrine is God's immanence in the world. He indicates that new, ecological thinking about God must no longer center on the distinction between God and the world but on the recognition of the presence of God in the world and the presence of the world in God.[40]

Moltmann traces the emphasis on transcendence in the Old Testament to the pantheistic, animist environment in which Judaism developed.[41] It was necessary and appropriate to distinguish belief in Yahweh from the idolatrous fertility and field gods of Canaanite culture. Cartesian methodology, however, took these distinctions into an entirely different context and used them to legitimate an anti-ecological, mechanistic world view.

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[39] Haeckel quoted in Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 194.

[40] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 13.

[41] Ibid.

Moltmann argues that an appropriate understanding of the biblical doctrine of immanence is founded on a trinitarian process of creation.[42] Traditionally, theology stressed the role of the Father in creation in a way which resulted in a heightened sense of transcendence. Moltmann proposes that the full trinitarian nature of creation be developed, especially the neglected role of the Spirit. He does this by focusing on the understanding of every created thing in terms of the energy infused continually by the Spirit. God is immanent in His creation by virtue of the presence of His Spirit; "God's Spirit acts into and penetrates the world, effecting and fashioning the world's coherence without Himself becoming merged in it."[43] In words that complement Maximus' *Logos-logoi* understanding in early Christianity, Moltmann states,

> There is tension in this understanding of God and creation, but it proceeds from an immanent tension in God himself: God created the world, and at the same time entered into it. He calls it into existence, and at the same time manifests himself through it...The God who is transcendent in relation to the world, and the God who is immanent in that world are one and the same God. So in God's creation of the world we can perceive a self-differentiation and a self-identification on God's part.[44]

This is a profoundly ecological theology. God's relationship to creation is not one of simple cause and effect; He relates in complex fashion with all the intricate lines of

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[42] Ibid., 11.

[43] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 12.

[44] Ibid., 15.

integration which are characteristic of God as Trinity. Creation has always been, and continues to be, a genuinely contingent order.[45]

Leonardo Boff's Notion of God's Spirit

Leonardo Boff is the first Latin American theologian of liberation to situate social and political liberation within a broader ecological framework. Although the Theology of Liberation did not begin with or express early a concern for the environment, Boff's works of the 1990s represent his re-conception of liberation around ecological models. Reflecting on the Latin American experience, Boff discerns interrelatedness among ecological, human, social, and spiritual aspects of life,[46] which is also a crucial method to be used in order to understand *Donghak*'s socio-historical background.

Boff's work is in many ways representative of an approach to socioecological ethics that has become quite common. In Boff's work there remains a strong emphasis on issues of justice. The link between economic injustices and ecological deterioration is the topic of many ecumenical contributions to socioecological ethics. This link is captured in the notion of "eco-justice" where the "eco" refers to both economy and ecological injustices.[47] The struggle for eco-justice seeks to challenge the abuse of power that results in the situation that poor people have to suffer the effects of ecological damage caused by the greed of others. Complementarily, Dieter Hessel defines eco-justice: Eco-justice

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[45] Ibid., 17.

[46] Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 12.

[47] Ibid., 16.

provides a dynamic framework for thought and action that fosters ecological integrity and the struggle for social and economic justice. It emerges through constructive human responses that serve environmental health and social equity together – for the sake of human well-being with otherkind.[48] Hessel's thinking is expressed, too, in Hart's concepts of socioecological ethics and socioecological praxis ethics, as described in *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science, and Space*.[49]

This link between ecological deterioration and economic injustice is neatly articulated in the title of Boff's work *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. The logic that exploits the oppressed classes and subjects peoples to the interests of a few rich and powerful countries is the same as the logic that devastates the Earth and plunders its wealth. In this context, Boff offers a sharp critique of the economic models of sustained growth and of sustainable development. As a citizen of Brazil, he is particularly concerned with the destruction of the Amazon rainforests by macro-economic projects that are insensitive to the ecological balance of this bioregion. This is leading not only to a loss of biodiversity but also to injustices towards indigenous peoples.[50] In fact, the poor are the most threatened beings in creation. To emphasize the link between people and the

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[48] Dieter T. Hessel ed., *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 18.

[49] See Chapter 6 in John Hart, *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science and Space* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013).

[50] Boff, *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor*, 86.

environment, Boff prefers to use the term "social ecology" instead of other forms of ecological awareness where the emphasis is on the natural environment only.[51]

In Boff's work there is an overwhelming emphasis on a retrieval of concepts such as "ecological wholeness," "interconnectedness," a "holistic" approach, the "community of life," and a sense of the dignity and sacredness of the Earth that can also be found in *Donghak* tradition. These themes have been reiterated in numerous contributions to ecological ethics, most notably in indigenous ethics, ecofeminist ethics, the creation spirituality of Matthew Fox, some exponents of process theology, and numerous others. This correlates with what Rosemary Ruether has called a sacramental approach to ecological theology. Such a sacramental approach draws on the Bible and on patristic and medieval mysticism to speak to the heart, to inspire a vision of the sacred and to express an ecstatic experience of communion within the Earth community. It is distinct from a covenantal approach that draws inspiration from the Bible and the covenantal tradition to emphasize a commitment for right relationships within the earth community.[52]

Boff regards the disruption of connectedness as the ultimate root of the ecological crisis. He speaks of a new paradigm that is coming to birth in which connectedness and the sense of a planetary community will form the basis for a universal religion.[53] It will seek convergences through restoring the sacredness of all things, reclaiming the dignity of the Earth, rediscovering the mission of human beings to celebrate communion and life,

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Rosemary Ruether, "Conclusion: Eco-justice at the Center of the Church's Mission," In Dieter T. Hessel & Rosemary R. Ruether eds., *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Wellbeing of Earth and Humans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 603-614.

[53] Boff, *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor*, 68.

and encountering the mystery of God. It will draw not only on instrumental reason (*logos*) but also on affectivity and sensitivity (*pathos*), passion (*eros*) and nature's inner voice (*daimon*).[54] It is characterized by wholeness, interdependence, complexity, complementarity, reciprocity, creativity, the common good and a shared destiny.

Many ecological ethicists draw inspiration from contemporary science, most notably from the "story of the universe" as reconstructed by astrophysics, geology, evolutionary biology and other sciences. Many find an ecological moral to this story. On the one hand, the story of the universe illustrates the insignificance of the human species in space and time amidst the vast dimensions of the cosmos.[55] This may help to counter the dominant culture of anthropocentrism and to rediscover our place in the cosmos and in solidarity with the rest of the Earth community. On the other hand, this story illustrates the significance, in terms of a high degree of complexity, of the emergence of the human species. This may help to emphasize human responsibility towards the Earth community.[56]

Boff offers his own account of the history of the cosmos and of the emergence of a living planet (*Gaia*). He concludes from this story that the ecocide for which the human species is responsible renders it to be the Satan of the Earth.[57] He draws widely on

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[54] Boff, *Cry of the Earth*, 12.

[55] Ibid., 65.

[56] Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 17-20.

[57] Boff, *Cry of the Earth*, 69

insights from contemporary science, including astrophysics, quantum theory, molecular biology, thermodynamics, chaos theory, and so on. Recent developments in these fields illustrate for Boff the thrust of the new paradigm in which there is room for a non-linear logic characterized by complexity, self-organization (*autopoiesis*), openness, novelty, and mystery.[58]

An ecological ethic of creation has to draw on a doctrine of God that can do justice to both the transcendence of a Creator God and the presence of God in the history of the cosmos. For many, the immanence of God is particularly important to avoid the alienation between God and the world resulting from a deist notion of God.[59] The presence of God in the created order also seems to emphasize the sacredness of the Earth as God's dwelling place. Many ecological ethicists are attracted to panentheism in order to highlight both God's immanence and transcendence. Ecofeminist Sallie McFague often speaks of the world as God's body. The notion of God's primordial self-withdrawal in order to make room for the emergence of creation within God is often used to develop an ethic of creation from such a panentheist point of departure.[60]

Boff supports such a panentheist position explicitly. He argues that God is present in the cosmos and that the cosmos is present in God. He criticizes pantheism for failing to

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[58] Ibid.

[59] See Moltmann for such an emphasis on the immanence of God in creation. Moltmann says: "If the creative God himself dwells in his creation, then he is making it his own home, 'on earth as it is in heaven.' All created beings then find in nearness to him the inexhaustible wellspring of their life, and for their part find home and rest in God" (Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 5).

[60] See Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993).

make a distinction between God and the world.[61] This lack of difference may easily lead to indifference. All is not God. However, God and the world cannot be separated either. They are open to one another and intertwined with one another. Therefore, "In embracing the world, we shall be embracing God."[62] Boff here refers to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's notion of transparency to explain both God's transcendence and God's immanence. Transparency is spiritual mediation of the presence of transcendence within immanence. When this happens reality becomes transparent. "The great mystery of Christianity is not exactly the appearance, but the transparence of God in the universe."[63]

Boff appreciates Hart's idea of a sacramental commons, which he sees as related to his own understandings but adding a new dimension. In his "Foreword" to *Sacramental Commons*, Boff comments,

> This work by John Hart is very unique. It discusses a traditional theme in Christian theology−the sacramental world−but in an original and surprising way. . . .The universe is sacramental because it is full of messages and meanings that can be appropriated by the human being who is sensitive to the spiritual dimension of the world. The world is not just transcendent and immanent. It is transparent to the presence of the Spirit who actuates it in the evolutionary process and in all the movements of nature and history. We form, truly, an immense cosmic, biotic, and human community. . . .The importance of John Hart's contribution is that he recovers natural sacraments and joins them to social sacraments. . . .Discussing a sacramental vision of the world as John Hart does helps to create a new spirituality−that is, a new experience of the Spirit acting within everything. At the same time, he offers a valuable contribution for a culture to appreciate the sacrality

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[61] Boff, *Cry of the Earth*, 91.

[62] Ibid., xii.

[63] Teilhard quoted in Boff, *Cry of the Earth*, 154.

> of creation and to learn to respect it and care for it as it is in itself and as it is in communion with us.[64]

Boff develops his theological position from a point of departure in Teilhard's well-known evolutionary schema. Teilhard identified a tendency toward increasing complexity in evolutionary history in terms of the four phases of *cosmogenesis* (the coming into being of the cosmos), *biogenesis* (the emergence of life), *noogenesis* (the emergence of consciousness) and *Christogenesis* (the transfiguration of the cosmos according to the image of the incarnate Christ). Boff builds on this form of natural theology and develops it into a trinitarian vision in which the cosmos participates in the interplay of perichoretic relationships in the life of the trinity.[65]

Boff notes that God's reality need not be brought in from the outside on the basis of a revealed treasury of some religious tradition. God's reality is a manifestation of the religious dimension of Earth itself. This is evident from experiences of sacredness, enchantment, "noble silence: (Eckhardt) and, above all, in the sense of mystery that is common to all cultures."[66] This sense of mystery, which Boff refers to as the "theosphere," allows for the development of a natural theology: "God is the name we give to this

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[64] Boff, "Foreword," in Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, ix-x.

[65] It should be noted that there is no reference to Teilhard's schema in Boff's earlier work on the trinity. There he does emphasize, following the work of Moltmann, the notion of the trinity as a divine communion and the perichoretic relationships between Father, Son and Spirit. He also discusses the social implications of such a notion of the trinity. However, unlike in his later work, this trinitarian theology is not situated within the context of natural theology or the evolutionary history of the cosmos.

[66] Boff, *Cry of the Earth*, 156-157.

mystery enveloping us on all sides and flowing over us in all realms."[67] Boff emphasizes the discovery of unfathomable mystery: "Mystery is the dimension of depth to be found in every person, in every creature, and in reality as a whole; it has a necessarily unfathomable, that is, inexplicable aspect."[68] Traces of mystery and the divine presence are evident at the level of quantum mechanics, chaos and throughout the process of *cosmogenesis*. The divine presence becomes even more evident in the emergence of life on Earth and especially through the emergence of human consciousness.

The emergence of a human awareness of the divine presence is possible though the unfolding of what Boff calls "spirit." This unfolding is expressed in the following Eastern poem that Boff is fond of quoting:

> The Spirit (God) is sleeping in the rock,
> dreams in the flower,
> awakens in the animal,
> and knows that it is awake in the human being.[69]

Spirit is the vital energy that permeates the cosmos. This is particularly recognized in animistic traditions and in indigenous religions. Everything is filled with this vital energy: "Everything sends us a message; everything speaks or can speak: trees, colors, wind, animals, roads, persons, and household things."[70] Everything has a spirit that allows each to interact with others. This spirit is the dynamism, the energy, breath or wind (*ruah*) that

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[67] Ibid., 140.

[68] Ibid., 143.

[69] Ibid., 169.

[70] Ibid., 158.

is present in the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, the atmosphere and particularly in the biosphere.[71] This spirit as cosmic force and vital energy blows wherever it wills and energizes the entire *cosmogenesis*. Boff describes the process of *cosmogenesis* as one of producing increasing complexity, interiority, and connectedness.[72] The spirit at work in the process of *cosmogenesis* is epitomized by the human spirit. Here the spirit becomes aware of its own vitality. Indeed, consciousness is the highest and most complex form of life. This allows for a new form of communication, sensitivity and freedom that expresses itself as "a force creating unity, communion, communication and meaning."[73]

God's reality is for Boff far from a mere human construction. Yet, it is only through the human spirit that the spirit that has been active throughout evolutionary history is for the first time recognized as a holy or divine spirit (or Spirit). This Spirit enlivens the whole universe. The Spirit is energy, life, an ever self-actualizing process, communicating itself and transcending itself.[74] The presence of this Spirit can be detected in our midst through a number of experiences. Boff identifies the following: (1) Ecstasy (an experience of exuberance through an extreme intensification of the presence); (2) Enthusiasm (literally: being inhabited by God); (3) Inspiration (the experience of being possessed by a greater power); (4) Communication (the ability for self-transcendence

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., 149-150.

[73] Ibid., 160-161.

[74] Ibid., 163.

through the establishment of relationships); and (5) the presence of reasonability and order in the universe.[75]

Boff subsequently develops this form of natural theology towards a trinitarian theology. He notes that the presence of the divine Spirit was identified with the third person of the trinity through the emergence of the Christian tradition. In particular, this was the result of decisions at the Council of Nicea-Constantinople (381 CE) where the divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit were asserted. Subsequently, the collective mind of the Christian tradition became convinced that the way to name God is trinitarian.

In retrospect, the Christian tradition recognized the Holy Spirit as the driving force of the cosmogenic process. The presence of the Holy Spirit permeates the Earth. The Holy Spirit became incarnate, it "pitched its tent among us" – in the temple, in the people of Israel, in the prophets, and then descends over Maria.[76] The presence of the Holy Spirit culminates in the process of *Christogenesis*. Through the Spirit the divine *logos* became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus there emerged what Teilhard de Chardin referred to as a Christic consciousness.[77] In the risen one, the evolution of the cosmos becomes a revolution, a refiguration of the world.[78] For Christians, these events anticipate the fulfillment of the history of the cosmos that will entail the consummation of all things in Christ. This

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[75] Ibid., 162-163.

[76] Ibid., 166.

[77] Ibid., 171.

[78] Ibid., 182.

culminates in a trinitarian vision where the whole cosmos will participate in the life of the trinity. Boff describes this work of the Spirit in the following way:

> The Spirit uniting everything inside and outside the Trinity will orchestrate the universal symphony. Ecology will be complete, for all will be in their true *oikos* in an infinite bond of sympathy, in their maternal and paternal home where the Spirit has ever been dwelling, now fully illuminated and transfigured by the Spirit's utter self-communication.[79]

Since I come from a theological tradition that is on the other side of the spectrum, it is rather difficult for me to assess Boff's work. There is a typically Catholic emphasis in Boff's work on consonance, integration, harmony and an organic whole. This is particularly evident in his use of natural theology to integrate the scientific reconstruction of the history of the universe with the trinitarian vision of the Christian tradition. By contrast, my own reformed tradition would emphasize the alienation between God and humanity and between humanity and the Earth that results from human sin.[80] A sensitivity for the impact of sin in the world and on human knowledge leads to a suspicion against knowledge of God derived purely from natural theology. The language of the reformed tradition therefore allows for stark contrasts between God and the world, for dialectic oppositions, for the unresolved paradox. This language is realistic in recognizing that alienation characterizes the human condition and that ecological destruction can only be resolved if such alienation can be addressed. It affirms that such

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[79] Ibid., 173.

[80] Boff is, of course, very sensitive to the many contemporary manifestations of sin and evil in the world (e.g. anthropocentrism, capitalism, religious legitimation of oppression, and so on). For Boff, sin implies the disruption of connections and connectedness. He is nevertheless confident in the ability of human consciousness to detect the divine presence in the world.

alienation can only be overcome by God, and not by innate human capabilities or by an increasing human consciousness of the mystery of the cosmos. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, the reformed ecumenist, raises similar questions in conversation with Boff's notion of a re-enchantment of creation:

> But for many, questions still remain. How holy is the creation? How is an awareness of the Spirit's presence within the material world distinguished from worshipping the earth as sacred? Has the power of sin and death infected the nature of creation itself? Or has it only distorted humans in their relationship to creation?[81]

For me, the question in assessing Boff's work is therefore one of how the "Catholic substance" and the "Protestant principle" can be integrated with one another (if at all).

Several theological perspectives in the 20th century emphasized God's transcendence and otherness. This served as a powerful critique against the ideologies of nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism and apartheid. By contrast, the new focus on the immanence of the Spirit encourages an appreciation of the intimate connections of God's Spirit with the created order.[82] An emphasis on the immanence of God correlates with an emphasis on the sacredness of creation. Such a new appreciation for the sacred should deter the destruction of the environment.

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[81] Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, *Redeeming the Creation: The Rio Earth Summit: Challenges for the Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1992), 54.

[82] Ibid.

Shi Chonju in *Donghak*

Donghak is composed of the most representative characters of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and *Seohak* (西學, 서학, Western Learning / Christianity) in terms of a life based on the traditional thought of the indigenous common people of Korea. For example, Confucianism's "respecting Heaven," Buddhism's "being present," Daoism's "caring for other beings," and the Western concept of a personal God have been fused into *Donghak* thought. Therefore, study of traditional Korean ways of thinking is also needed as a primary resource. Because *Donghak* is essentially spiritual and socioecological, its thought can be applied readily to contemporary Korean contexts. Since it is especially significant, and the primary focus from *Donghak* used in this dissertation, I will examine the concept and practice of *Shi Chonju* (侍天主, 시천주).[83] Scholar Kyoung-jae Kim expresses elements of *Shi Chonju* in his work *Donghak Sasang kwa Donghak Hyongmyong* (1989) succinctly when he writes,

> Different from Confucianism or Buddhism, Su-woon emphasized the experience of *Hanulnim* (한울님) that dwells within everything in the universe. He explained the status of religious experience of *Shi* in his book, *Dongkyong Daejeon*. Therefore, through the religious phenomenological analysis of *Shi Chonju*, the way is shown as *Naeyou Silryong* (내유신령), *Oeyou Kihwa* (외유기화), and *Kagji Buli* (각지불이)" (my translation).[84]

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[83] "All human beings and other living beings in our universe bear God within."

[84] "수운의 신 체험에 있어서 그 이전의 유교적 전통이나 불교적 종교관과 구별시켜주는 결정적 특징은 하늘님을 모든 사람이 그의 생명체 몸에 '모신다'(侍)는 체험적 신앙이다. 그는 스스로 동경대전 안에서 모신다'(侍)는 종교현상적 체험 상태를 풀어 설명하려 했는데, '侍者內有神靈外有氣化一世之人各知不移者也'가 그것이다. 그러므로, 수운의 '시천주 체험'의 종교현상학적 분석도 위 세 마디 말의 의미를 바르게

The new field I envision should include a comprehensive ethical framework that would help ecological ethicists identify and reason through the value dimensions of problematic situations, and address the moral claims placed upon them in the course of their research or practical work. Assistance in this effort would be provided by the proposal of Ben A. Minteer and James P. Collins, should it be realized: the creation of an extensive case database, a tool kit that can help people learn from the problems and solutions of others and improve their critical thinking and moral reasoning abilities within a research or management setting.[85] My work would also be informed by Hart's concept of *cosmosocioecological praxis ethics*, as elaborated in *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science, and Space*, which would complement Minteer's and Collins' proposal by providing an ethical method to consider the cases they suggest. The project I am undertaking will be unique for and helpful to religious communities and leaders who want to overcome the gap between consciousness and conduct as well as theory and practice.

Method of Investigation

The dissertation will develop an approach to the problematic outlined above from Christian spirituality informed by global socioecological realities and socio-ethical thought, and suggest its significance specifically for Korean ecological contexts. It will

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이해하는 해석학적 과정이 될 것이다." In Kyong-jae Kim, *Donghak Sasang kwa Donghak Hyongmyong* (Donghak Thought and Donghak Revolution) (Seoul: Chong-a Publishers, 1989), 13.

[85] See Ben A. Minteer and James P. Collins, "Ecological Ethics: Building a new Tool Kit for Ecologists and Biodiversity Managers." *Conservation Biology* (19:1803-12, 2005).

explore, too, avenues for other religions to approach the ecological challenge, by focusing on dimensions of Korean traditional religions that are summoned, as is Christianity, to creative thinking in the face of the growing threats to the planet.

A creative and integrated Christian socio-ethical approach to the connections and tensions between ecological wholeness and social justice in Korean contexts defines the ideal method of investigation. This approach, which is based on Hart's definition of Christian social ethics, is reflectively integrated with social experience, social consciousness, social analysis, social theory, social commitment, and social projects.[86] Growing up and living within a society can foster the development and observation of social experience. Social experience provides individuals with the skills and habits necessary for participating within their own societies, as a society itself is formed through "a plurality of shared experiences forming norms, customs, values, traditions, social roles, symbols and languages."[87] Social consciousness is consciousness shared within a society. "It can also be defined as social awareness; to be aware of the problems that different societies and communities face on a day-to-day basis; to be conscious of the difficulties and hardships of society."[88] Social analysis comes from "critical evaluation of societal values, of the relationship between societal institutions and societal harms and benefits."[89] Social theories are frameworks of empirical evidence used to study and

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[86] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 210.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid.

interpret social phenomena. A tool used by social scientists, social theories relate to historical debates over the most valid and reliable methodologies, as well as the primacy of either structure or agency. Hart explains that "certain social theories attempt to remain strictly scientific, descriptive, and objective. Conflict theories, by contrast, present ostensibly normative positions, and often critique the ideological aspects inherent in conventional, traditional thought."[90] Social commitment indicates dedication to using social theory to promote justice for and in communities. Social projects are practical efforts to express social commitment by eliminating harmful societal policies and practices and implementing beneficial policies and practices.[91] Therefore, the method of investigation does not only pursue abstract or theoretical principle; it also focuses on practical and participatory projects for ecological wholeness with social justice, especially in a Korean context.

The relation between Korean traditional eco-spirituality and Hart's ecological spirituality of the sacramental commons is the body of information that will form the focus of my work. Such a work would include a theological interpretation of humanity's place in the cosmos, an empirical reading of our socioecological contexts, ethical principles and values defining right forms of social organization and right relations between human groups and between human beings and nature, and analysis of, and prescription for, one or more issues affecting both society and Earth. Korean ecological contexts will be investigated with this method.

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

Mapping the Dissertation

The purpose of the dissertation is to propose a comparative ecological ethics as a socio-ethical method for the Korean churches as they face the challenge of responding to the ecological crisis arising on the Korean peninsula. The study pursues the following interrelated objectives through the process of praxis ethics.[92]

First, in chapter two, to do a socioecological analysis, the writer traces the Korean environmental history into the contemporary ecological context, and articulates the contemporary Korean geopolitical situation regarding ecological issues. The chapter surveys Western civilization and the ecological crisis in terms of its influence on Korean society. The modern history of Korean environmental thought and practices regarding multiple religions is critically described in this chapter. In addition, the writer explores global perspectives on nature, and discusses the value of Korean socioecological thought and its socioecological alternative movement.

Second, to consider implications of a socioecological ethics, chapter three surveys Korean religious traditions such as *Donghak* that are related to ecological ethics, and links them with contemporary Korean religious ecological thought. Specifically, the historical background and development of *Donghak* tradition and Korean ecological ethics in *Donghak* and other traditional religions will be analyzed. Then, the writer defines the relations with contemporary Korean religious ecological spirituality.

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[92] John Hart, "Cosmic Commons: Contact and Community," *Theology and Science* (8: 4, 371-392. Nov. 2010), 388.

Third, to suggest a socioecological vision, chapter four makes a connection between Korean traditional eco-spirituality and Hart's ecological spirituality of the sacramental commons. The writer denotes *Shi Chonju* as the essence of ecological ideas in *Donghak* and tries to build a comparative approach by analyzing sacramental commons and *Donghak*. As second comparative construct, Jürgen Moltmann's Spirit of life and *Donghak*'s *Ki* concept will be critically compared. With these analyses and approaches, this chapter elucidates creation consciousness as a common socioecological vision and an expected future location of Korean socioecological ethics.

Fourth, to formulate a socioecological project, in chapter five the writer suggests a pedagogical and communal program that might provide a theoretical-practical foundation for religion-related community actions. This part emphasizes the importance of the socioecological project in the contextual dimension of ethical integration. The writer adopts Hart's concept of praxis ethics as a dialogic relationship between theory and practice in context. The dissertation proposes socioecologically conscious communities in Korean and Spanish contexts. To build socioecological approaches to socioecological wellbeing, the author develops a pedagogical program for religion-related community settings. Finally, the dissertation examines the relations among John Hart, Jürgen Moltmann, and *Donghak* within a given pedagogical framework to draw a common socioecological ethics and consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

KOREA: ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

Western Civilization, the Ecological Crisis, and Their Influence on Korean Society

Environmental pollution and the destruction of the ecosystem foretell the impending demise of all living beings if critical steps are not taken to reverse current trends and mitigate impacts of human conduct on Earth. Desertification is progressing at an alarmingly rapid speed in many parts of the world and meteorological disasters such as floods, typhoons, tsunamis, extreme heat waves, and cold spells have killed numerous people and other living creatures. If climate change continues to worsen, survival on Earth will become exceptionally difficult. In the face of this crisis, doubt is increasingly arising about the values, economic structures, and practices of Western civilization, the pioneer of modernity.

Economic globalization has converted the entire planet into a common ground. Economic access enables persons and organizations to exploit far distant resources and avoid responsibility for the consequences to a greater extent than when the commons is exploited by local inhabitants. The global commons is unmanaged in an ecological sense and even in an economic sense if economic development ignores humankind's responsibility to its descendants as well as those of other species. A widely accepted theorem of ecology is that it is impossible to do just one thing. Sustainable use of the planet requires that humankind do nothing that seriously depletes and/or damages both natural capital and ecosystem services. In an uncrowded world, a sustainability ethic

would be less needed than it is now. Humankind now lives in a crowded world where leaving a habitable planet for future human generations and those of other biota is increasingly problematic.

It must be recognized that the problems currently experienced by humanity are not limited to certain areas or regions, but are global and general, and that it is imperative that we search for a new alternative for the sake of all nature, humanity, and human society. Many have asserted the need to view nature, humanity, and human society as a single organic living entity, and noted the value of treating each of these components as parts of a single body in the creation of a new mode of life in coexistence.[1]

The human-centered dominant minority-controlled industrial culture of the Western world which sprouts scientific technology has dominated, conquered and exploited the relatively weak nations, peoples, and biota. This perspective and practice has dichotomized all living beings and understood them to be in conflictive and competitive relations. It has overlooked or rejected precious spiritual values, which cannot be reduced to material values, and has continued to destroy nature and annihilate life in the name of development and progress. Consequently, Western anthropocentric ideologies are now rejected in many parts of the world and new discourses have emerged to establish a new value system and seek alternatives.[2]

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[1] James E. Lovelock, *Gaia: A new Look at Life on Earth* (UK: Oxford University Press, 1979), 7.

[2] Edward O. Wilson, *The Creation: A Plea to Save Life on Earth* (New York: W.W. Norton), 2006), 47.

Ecological destruction cannot be solved simply through technology or money. This study emphasizes the source of ecological problems to be as fundamental as our perspectives or consciousness on nature and the value of life. The question of the determination of our life values and attitudes is crucial. Socioecological movement and conduct requires a more fundamental approach, in addition to concrete practices, to deal with our immediate problems. Here, by "fundamental approach," I mean a critical modification in our ways of thinking and living.

An Overview on Korean Religious Systems

Different from some cultures where a single religion is dominant, Korean culture includes a wide variety of religious elements that have shaped the people's way of thinking and behavior. In the early stages of history in Korea, religious and political functions were combined; later they became distinct.

Before the beginning of modernization, Koreans lived under the influences of traditional religion, Buddhism, Daoism or Confucianism, and in modern times, the Christian faith has made strong inroads into the country, bringing forth yet another important factor that may change the spiritual landscape of the people. The rapid pace of industrialization which occurred within a couple of decades compared to a couple of centuries in the West, has brought about considerable apprehension and alienation while disrupting the peace of mind of Koreans, encouraging their pursuit of solace in religious activities. As a result, the population of religious believers has expanded markedly with religious institutions emerging as influential social organizations.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution in Korea. According to a 2005 social statistics survey carried out every ten years, 52 percent of Koreans follow a specific religious faith. Buddhists account for some 43.8 percent followed by Protestants at 33.2 percent and Catholics at 20.9 percent of the religious population.[3]

Traditional Religion

Traditional religion is a non-institutional religion which does not have a systematic structure but permeates the daily lives of the people through folklore and customs. Ancient humankind in Korea had an animistic belief that every object in the world possessed a soul. Humans were believed to have a soul that never dies. So a corpse was laid with its head toward the east in the direction of the sunrise. They believed that while good spirits would bring good luck to human beings, evil spirits would bring misfortune.

Traditional religion gradually gave way to Confucianism or Buddhism as a tool for governing the people but its influence remained for a long time. The leader of traditional religion, *mudang* (무당) in Korean is a mediator who can link the living with the spiritual world where the dead dwell.[4] *Mudang* is considered capable of helping people avoid bad luck, curing sickness, and assuring an auspicious passage from this world to the next. *Mudang* is also believed to resolve conflicts and tensions that might

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[3] Statistics Korea. Korean Social Statistics for Social Indicators, http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/news/1/17/1/index.board?bmode=list&bSeq=&aSeq=&pageNo=2&rowNum=10&navCount=10&currPg=&sTarget=title&sTxt= (accessed January 23, 2013).

[4] Donald N. Clark, *Culture and Customs of Korea* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 45.

exist between the living and the dead. Korean traditional religion includes the worship of thousands of spirits that are believed to inhabit in every object in the natural world, including rocks, trees, mountains and streams, as well as celestial bodies.

Traditional religion in ancient Korea was a religion of fear and superstition, but for modern generations, it remains a colorful and artistic ingredient of their culture. A traditional religious ritual, rich with exorcist elements, presents theatrical elements with music and dance. The introduction of more sophisticated religions like Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity did not result in the abandonment of traditional beliefs and practices. They assimilated elements of indigenous faith and coexisted peacefully.[5] Korean traditional religion has remained an underlying belief of the Korean people as well as a vital aspect of their culture.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a highly disciplined philosophical religion which emphasizes personal salvation through rebirth in an endless cycle of reincarnation. Buddhism was introduced into Korea in 372 CE during the Koguryo Kingdom period by a monk named Sundo who came from Qian Qin Dynasty in China. In 384 CE, the monk Malananda brought Buddhism to Baekche Kingdom from the Eastern Jin State of China. In Silla Kingdom, Buddhism was disseminated by the monk Ado of Koguryo by the mid-fifth century. Buddhism seems to have been well supported by the ruling people of the Three Kingdoms because it was suitable as a spiritual buttress for the governing structure, with

[5] Ibid., 46.

Buddha as the single reality of worship related to the king as the single object of authority. Under royal patronage, many temples were constructed and believers grew steadily. By the sixth century monks and artisans were migrating to Japan with scriptures and religious artifacts to form the basis of early Buddhist culture there.[6]

By the time Silla unified the peninsula in 668 CE, it had embraced Buddhism as the state religion, though the government systems were along Confucian lines. Royal preference for Buddhism in this period produced a magnificent flowering for Buddhist arts and temple architecture including Bulguk-sa temple and other relics in Kyongju, the capital of Silla. The state cult of Buddhism began to deteriorate as the nobility indulged in a luxurious lifestyle. Buddhism then established the *Sun* sect (Chinese *Chan*; Japanese *Zen*) to concentrate on finding universal truth through a frugal lifestyle.[7]

The rulers of the succeeding Koryo Dynasty were even more enthusiastic in their support of the religion. During Koryo, Buddhist arts continued to flourish with unreserved support from the aristocracy. When Yi Sung-gye, founder of the Chosun Dynasty, staged a revolt and had himself proclaimed king in 1392, he tried to remove all influences of Buddhism from the government and adopted Confucianism's guiding principles for state management and moral decorum. Throughout the five-century reign of Chosun, any effort to revive Buddhism was met with strong opposition from Confucian scholars and officials.

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[6] Ibid., 42.

[7] Ibid., 44.

When Japan forcibly took over Chosun as a colonial ruler in 1910, it made attempts to assimilate Korean Buddhist sects with those of Japan. These attempts failed, however, and even resulted in a revival of interest in native Buddhism among Koreans. The past few decades have seen Buddhism undergo a renaissance involving efforts to adapt to the changes of modern society. While the majority of monks remain in mountain areas, absorbed in self-discipline and meditation, some come down to the cities to spread their religion. There are a large number of monks engaging in scholastic research in religion at universities in and outside of Korea. *Sun* (meditation)-oriented Korean Buddhism has been growing noticeably with many foreigners following in the footsteps of revered Korean monks through training at Songgwang-sa temple in South Cholla province and *Sun* centers in Seoul and other major cities.[8]

Confucianism

Confucianism was the moral and religious belief founded by Confucius in the 6th century B.C.E. Basically it is a system of ethical precepts - benevolent love, righteousness, decorum, and wise leadership−designed to inspire and preserve the good management of family and society. Confucianism was a religion without a god like early Buddhism, but ages passed and the sage and principal disciplines were canonized by late followers.

Confucianism was introduced along with the earliest copies of Chinese written materials around the beginning of the Christian era. The Three Kingdoms of Koguryo,

[8] Ibid., 43.

Baekche, and Silla all left records that indicate the early existence of Confucian influence. In Koguryo, a state university called Taehak-kam was established in 372 C.E., and private Confucian academies were founded throughout the province.[9]

The Unified Silla sent delegations of scholars to Tang China to observe the workings of the Confucian institutions firsthand and to bring back voluminous writings on the subjects. For Koryo Dynasty in the 10th century, Buddhism was the state religion, and Confucianism formed the philosophical and structural backbone of the state. The civil service examination of Kwager adopted after the Chinese system in the late 10th century, greatly encouraged studies in the Confucian classics and deeply implanted Confucian values in Korean minds.

The Chosun Dynasty accepted Confucianism as the official ideology and developed a Confucian system of education, ceremony, and civil administration. When Korea was invaded by Western European countries and Japan in the late 19th century, the Confucian scholars raised armies to fight against the invaders. Efforts were also made to reform Confucianism to adapt it to the changing conditions of the times.

These reformists accepted the new Western civilization and endeavored to establish a modern independent government. Also, during Japanese occupation of Korea, these reformers joined many independence movements to fight against imperial Japan.

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[9] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 34.

Today, Confucian ancestral worship is still prevalent and filial piety highly revered as a virtue in Korean society.[10]

Catholicism

The tide of Christian mission activity reached Korea in the 17th century, when copies of Catholic missionary Matteo Ricci's works in Chinese were brought from Beijing. Along with religious doctrine, these books included aspects of Western learning such as the solar calendar and other matters that attracted the attention of the Chosun scholars of Silhak-pa, or the School of Practical Learning.

By the 18th century, there were several converts among these scholars and their families. No priests entered Korea until 1794, when a Chinese priest James Chu Munmo visited Korea. The number of converts continued to increase, although the propagation of foreign religion on Korean soil was still against the law and there were sporadic persecutions. By the year 1865, a dozen priests presided over a community of some 23,000 believers.

With the coming to power in 1863 of Daewon-gun, a xenophobic prince regent, persecution began in earnest and continued until 1873. In 1925, 79 Koreans who had been martyred during the Chosun Dynasty persecutions were beatified at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and in 1968 an additional 24 were honored in the same way.[11]

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[10] Ibid., 142.

[11] Clark, 47.

During and after the Korean War (1950-53), the number of Catholic relief organizations and missionaries increased. The Korean Catholic Church grew quickly and its hierarchy was established in 1962. The Roman Catholic Church in Korea celebrated its bicentennial with a visit to Seoul by Pope John Paul II and the canonization of 93 Korean and 10 French missionary martyrs in 1984. It was the first time that a canonization ceremony was held outside the Vatican. This gave Korea the fourth-largest number of Catholic saints in the world.[12]

Protestantism

In 1884, Horace N. Allen, an American medical doctor and Presbyterian missionary, arrived in Korea. Horace G. Underwood of the same denomination and Methodist Episcopal missionary, Henry G. Appenzeller, came from the United States the next year. They were followed by representatives of other Protestant denominations. The missionaries contributed to Korean society by rendering medical service and education as a means of disseminating their creed. Korean Protestants such as Dr. Seo Jae-pil, Yi Sang-chae, and Yun Chi-ho, all independence leaders, committed themselves to political causes.[13]

Protestant private educational institutions, such as the Yonhi and Ewha schools functioned to enhance nationalist thought among the public. The Seoul Young Men's

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[12] Ibid., 171.

[13] Ibid., 159.

Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in 1903 along with other Christian organizations. The organizations carried out socio-political programs actively, encouraging the inauguration of similar groupings of young Koreans. These groups pursued not only political and educational causes but also awakened social consciousness against superstitious practices and bad habits, while promoting the equality of men and women, elimination of the concubine system, and simplification of ceremonial observances.[14]

The ever-growing vitality of the Protestant Churches in Korea saw the inauguration of large-scale Bible study conferences in 1905. Four years later, "A Million Souls for Christ" campaign was kicked off to encourage massive new conversions to the Protestant faith. Protestantism was warmly received not only as a religious credo but also for its political, social, educational, and cultural aspects.[15]

As Protestantism became more accepted, the resulting liberalization allowed those oppressed, and even imprisoned, to enjoy new religious freedom. These new-found freedoms came to an end during the Japanese Occupation Period (1910 ~1945) when the Japanese imposed Shintoism on the Korean people and forbade all other religions, resulting in many martyrs. After liberation, in 1945, Korea once again began to experience religious freedom. In 1984, Korea commemorated the 100th anniversary of Protestantism in Korea.

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[14] Ibid., 49.

[15] Ibid.

Chondogyo

Chondogyo was initiated as a social and political movement against rampant competition and foreign encroachment in the 1860s. At that time, it was called *Donghak* (東學, 동학, Eastern learning) in contrast to *Seohak* (西學, 서학,Western learning). Following a name change in 1905 to Chondogyo (천도교, it literally means heavenly way), the religion continued to gain converts, spearheading the March First Independence Movement of 1919 against the Japanese occupation. However, since its peak around this period, Chondogyo has experienced a steady decline and only a small number of adherents remain in the twenty-first century.

The principle of Chondogyo is *In Nae Chon* (인내천), which means that the human is identical with "Hanulnim," the God of Chondogyo, but the human is not the same as God. Every human bears "Hanulnim" in their mind and this serves as the source of his dignity, while spiritual training makes him one with the divine. Though Chondogyo has never gathered enough adherents to rival Buddhism or Christianity, it has continued to be recognized in Korea as an authentic religious tradition.[16]

Islam

The first Koreans to be introduced to Islam were those who moved to northeastern China in the early 20th century under Japan's Occupation. A handful of converts returned home after World War II, but they had no place to worship until Turkish troops came

[16] Ibid., 53.

with the United Nations forces during the Korean War (1950-53) and allowed them to join their services.

Korean Islam's inaugural service was held in September 1955, followed by the election of the first Korean Imam (chaplain). The Korean Islamic Society was expanded and reorganized as the Korean Muslim Federation in 1967, and a central mosque was dedicated in Seoul in 1976.

With the economic boom in the Middle East in 1970s, many Koreans advanced to Islamic countries and became much interested in Islam there. Responding to a need of Dawah[17] to them, the Korea Muslim Federation established its branch and Islamic Center in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in March 1978 with the help of Sheikh Omar Abdullah Kamel. Regular Islamic lecture and education were given to non-Muslim Koreans in the Jeddah Islamic Center. As a result, about 8,000 Korean workers have embraced Islam up to now. In July, 1979, another branch was also established at the Zaharah camp of Samho Construction Co. in Kuwait. Mr. Sulaiman Lee Haeng-Lae (Imam of Seoul Central Mosque at that time) was dispatched in order to preach Islam to Korean workers in Kuwait; as a result, about 3,000 Korean workers became Muslims up to June 1984. An Indonesia branch was also opened in 1982.[18]

Korea Muslim Federation concentrated its Dawah activities on Islamic education and research. Seminars and lectures on Islam were frequently held at the Conference Hall of Seoul Central Masjid. These academic activities about Islam reached the summit when

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[17] Dawah means the practice or policy of conveying the message of Islam to non-Muslims.

[18] Hee-Soo Lee, *Han-Islam Kyorusa* (History of Korean-Islam Interchange) (Seoul: Moonduk-sa, 1991), 21-29.

the International Islamic Seminar was held in August 1997 with the financial support of Rabitah al-Alam al-Islami, Makkah. More than 100 Muslim scholars including 20 foreign Muslim scholars participated in this Seminar and had a lively discussion on the subject of "Islam and East Asia – History and Cultural Harmony." During the seminar, the opening ceremony of the Korea Institute of Islamic Culture (KIIC) was held.

Western Influence on Korean Society

In the present, Western civilization and Korean culture are mixed like salad in a bowl, and Koreans experience a culture clash. In order to deal with this, Koreans need to understand the characteristics of Korean culture and their impact on the political, economic and socio-cultural life in Korea. The main principles of Western civilization are individualism, freedom and equality, the rule of law, rationalism and confidence in the controllability of nature.

Korean democracy, capitalism, and modernization have originated from Western civilization. Democracy and capitalism share the same values and norms such as individualism, freedom, and the rule of law; democracy has, additionally, the value of equality; capitalism has been the most powerful driving force of modernization. For this reason, on the one hand, they have reinforced and enriched one another. On the other hand, they have some contradictory elements. For one thing, democracy and capitalism both are founded on individualism, but the former advocates political freedom and the latter economic freedom. For another, democracy can be more prosperous when economic equality is guaranteed, but capitalism does not guarantee economic equality.

Korean culture is rooted in traditional religion, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, collectivism, authoritarianism, and paternalism. Since South Korea became independent after World War II, it has pursued democracy, capitalism, and modernization simultaneously under the strong influence of the U.S. Consequently, it has become rapidly westernized and traditional culture has been eroded seriously.[19]

This dissertation's primary concern is not whether Westernization will eventually destroy traditional Korean culture or whether a hybrid culture will emerge, but how the influence has changed the Korean society and way of life in terms of socioecological ethics and wellbeing. Social structure is comparable to Earth's structure: just as the Earth's structure is composed of several strata, so is society. The structure of Korean society can be divided into four strata: modes of living and conduct, patterns of behavior, ways of thinking, and, finally, values, norms, principles, and consciousness. Additionally, just as the Earth's structure is vertically layered, so is society's structure. It means that when two different cultures come in contact, the upper stratum is pierced first by other cultural influences and gradually they penetrate into the lower strata. The upper stratum of a society is basically materialist in the sense that those elements are visible and tangible.

Korea willingly adopted democracy, capitalism, and modernization for political and economic development. For this reason, they accepted Western civilization because it is the very foundation of these concepts. Some senior people initially resisted Western civilization, but their strength has gradually weakened. It is a futile struggle because

[19] Cumings, 21.

without abandoning democracy, capitalism, and modernization it is impossible to reject Western civilization.[20]

Now, the first stratum of Korean society has been almost replaced by the Western modes of living and conduct, while the second stratum is being attacked by Western behavioral patterns. As Western civilization penetrates into the lower crusts of Korean society, the schism between the two becomes sharper and wider. Under this circumstance, Korea is faced with a dilemma.[21] If it wants to become a global modern state, it has no choice but to accommodate the main traits of democracy, capitalism, and modernization. However, it is most important, but most difficult, to replace the last crust of Korean society with Western culture even if Korea makes all-out efforts.

Traditional values and norms such as collectivism, authoritarianism, and Confucian principles cannot easily be replaced by individualism, rationalism, and egalitarianism over a short time. It will be easier to Westernize the young generation but very difficult to do the old generation. This is mainly because the old generation was born before democratization and modernization were progressing more vigorously and rapidly, while the young generation was born after that.

Whether Korea wants to or not, it has no choice but to accept Western values, norms, principles, and consciousness. If it does not, it cannot achieve a global modern state as mentioned. Moreover, most of Western values and norms are becoming universal

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[20] Ibid., 27.

[21] Ibid., 29.

values, and globalization is accelerating this process. After all this, ecological destruction is getting worse.[22]

There are three reasons why the ecological crisis in Korea is serious. First, the ideological difference in political opinions and behavior caused by loss of traditional attitudes of respect toward nature and concern for community wellbeing has produced consequent ecological destruction. Second, According to James Grayson, Korea has reached the mature stage of modernization five times faster than Western nations and has achieved democratization more than ten times faster.[23] Therefore, Koreans do not have enough time to digest Western civilization, and suffer from mental indigestion because it has victimized Koreans and devastated Korea's ecological system. Third, Korea has accepted democracy, capitalism, and modernization simultaneously without solving their drawbacks and contradictory aspects, and consequently the ecological crisis has become more complicated.

History of Korean Environmental Thought and Practice

The Republic of Korea ("Korea"), once called "the land of morning calm" blessed with an astonishing natural environment, faces challenging ecological problems that threaten the wellbeing of its citizens as well as other living creatures. Since the early 1960s, the country has pushed policies for industrialization, urbanization, economic growth, and foreign exports, and has achieved remarkable economic development.

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[22] James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History*, revised edition (London: Routledge, 2002), 7.

[23] Ibid., 11.

Behind the scene of this high economic growth, destruction of the natural environment has also proceeded at a high speed.

Extensive damage to ecosystems in Korea first occurred during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953). Ecological problems became further institutionalized in the 1960s under the leadership of former despotic President Chung-Hee Park, a symbolic "hero" of the successful Korean industrialization. His government initiated a developmentalist state based on an economic-growth-first policy. As in most developing countries, the people of Korea, soaked in post-war deprivation and widespread poverty, put their first priority on economic development over ecological protection. Korean government technocrats assumed, perhaps with the tacit consent of the populace, that ecological damage is the unavoidable byproduct of rapid economic growth. During this period, pollution was regarded as a symbol of increasing industrial capacity and a rising living standard: "Dark smoke arising from factories are symbols of our nation's growth and prosperity."[24]

This growth-oriented ideology has manifested an economic miracle. In one generation, Korea has managed the transition from a rural, undeveloped society to a modern economy. Today Korea has the eleventh largest economy in the world in terms of gross domestic product.[25] However, the "prize" of economic prosperity only came with

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[24] It is extracted from a speech by Chung-Hee Park. The statement is inscribed on a monument tower in the middle of Ulsan City which is regarded as a Mecca of Korean industrialization.

[25]IMF. IMF World Economic Outlook Database, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/02/weodata/index.aspx (accessed January 23, 2013).

an unquantifiable cost of ecological degradation.[26] According to the 2012 "Environmental Performance Index," Korea is ranked 43rd out of 132 countries.[27] The total carbon dioxide emission is ranked 9th in the world, contributing 1.7 percent of the world's total emission (as of 2009).[28]

Korea's pursuit of economic growth is a good example of unsustainable development where the highest priority is placed on economy with little regard to the environment. It was correct when the former Minister of Environment stated that "[the ecological] problems [in Korea] have arisen from the process of growth-oriented development that has so often exceeded the self-purification and reproduction capabilities of our natural environment."[29]

Policy and legal responses to such ecological problems have been slow and ineffective in safeguarding the health and safety of people let alone the wellbeing of other

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[26] For general discussions on the environmental problems in Korea, see for example, Norman Eder, *Poisoned Prosperity: Development, Modernization, and the Environment in South Korea* (M. E. Sharpe, New York, 1996); John F. Devlin and Nonita T. Yap, "Sustainable Development and the NICs: Cautionary Tales for the South in the New World (Dis)Order" (1994) 15 *Third World Quarterly* 49; Jae-Yong Chung and Richard J. R. Kirkby, *The Political Economy of Development and Environment in Korea* (Routledge, London, 2002); Gyu-Ho Jeong, "Characteristics of Korea's Environmental Problems" (2004) *Korea Focus* 123; and Richard J. Ferris Jr., "Aspiration and Reality in Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Singapore: An Introduction to the Environmental Regulatory Systems of Asia's Four New Dragons" (1993) 4 *Duke Journal of Comparative and International Law* 125.

[27] YCELP. Environmental Performance Index, http://epi.yale.edu/epi2012/rankings (accessed January 23, 2013).

[28] Millennium Development Goals Indicators. Carbon Dioxide Emissions: Development Indicators Unit Statistics Division of United Nations, http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx (accessed January 23, 2013).

[29] Myeong-Sook Han, "Korea's Market-based Policies for Environmental Improvements" Paper presented to the 6th Mansfield Pacific Retreat, Jeju, Korea, 2003.

biota. It was only in the fifth five-year Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986) that ecological conservation was first considered as a developmental issue in Korea.[30] Ecological legislation has always, and to a large extent remains, carefully devised not to hinder economic growth and development. Korea's environment-related legislation is premised fundamentally upon a growth-oriented ideology and associated anthropocentric outlook, and the concept of sustainable development is not recognized as the fundamental guiding principle of society.

However, with civil society strengthening, non-governmental organizations and grassroots people have been increasingly exerting substantial pressure on politicians to strengthen environmental laws, policies, and management practices, and to steer the future trajectory of Korean society towards sustainable development. Similar to the rapid economic development, a rising public ecological awareness resulted in a dramatic transition to ecological activism in about two decades. Today, ecological discourses such as sustainable development have become popular in the public arena.

However, even with the appearance of the former Myong-Bark Lee Administration, the old paradigm of growth and development still prevails. The Lee Administration took economic growth as one of the most important elements for national competitiveness in the era of globalization and neo-liberalism. Environmental movement organizations in Korea have carried out their active struggle against the Lee Administration's development-oriented economic policies that did not show any concern for nature. Many environmental organizations in Korea defined the current situation as an

[30] Kem Lowry and Richard A. Carpenter, "Institutionalizing Sustainable Development: Experiences in Five Countries" (1985) 5 *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 239, 244.

"environmental emergency" and were putting their efforts together to change Lee Administration policies. However, it was not quite clear how the government would respond to the recent activities and demands of these environmental organizations.

The history of the environmental movement in Korea is not long. Many Korean scholars agreed that it started in the late 1980s. The major environmental organizations were formed in the early 1990s, and they are still in operation. Before the 1990s, the Korean society concentrated all its efforts to drive out authoritative military dictatorships and establish democracy. The social movements throughout the 1990s have come to fruition in realizing democracy in South Korea. The environmental movement in Korea has started to root slowly in this social context.

Environmental Problems in South Korea

South Korea is a country of 100,000 km^2, 65% of which consists of mountains; a population of 50 million; four distinct seasons; and rainfall of about 1450 mm per year. The country has the world's fourth highest density of population. Thanks to substantial labor power and consistent economic development, the country has become the eleventh largest economic power with a GNP of more than USD 20,000 per person. Imports and exports of South Korea have increased considerably; the country imports the fifth largest amount of petroleum in the world, and its car manufacturing industry and the pelagic fishery are also ranked the fifth in the world. South Korea is ranked the seventh in the world in terms of the number of nuclear plants, with 21 of them. As a result of

industrialization, more than 85% of the population in South Korea is living in urban areas.[31]

In the early 1960s, the country was a poor agriculture-oriented country, with a GNP of USD 200 per person, the amount of export less than 100 million US dollars, about 30,000 automobiles, and around 85% of the population living in the farming and fishing communities.[32] However, Korea has achieved economic growth at the rate of 5% per year, and transformed itself into an urbanized industrial country. Due to this economic growth, the country was able to overcome poverty and is now enjoying wealth and convenience to certain degrees. Housing is provided to more than 90% of the urban households and more than 18 million cars are supplied (1 car per 2.6 persons). Korean companies have advanced into more than 170 countries across the world, and the number of South Koreans who travel abroad has also consistently increased.[33]

In order to understand the ecological problems in Korea, one should first understand the economic growth and development policies of the country. The growth-oriented policies of Korea were not concerned with the importance of the environment and ecology in the past. Their only interest was growth and development. The dictatorships for 30 years since 1960s truly cared their nickname, "development

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[31] IMF. IMF World Economic Outlook Database, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/02/weodata/index.aspx (accessed May 23, 2013).

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

dictatorship."[34] Those dictatorial authorities took any ecological question as a challenge against their system and oppressed it. The governmental policies, which could not last long, made indiscreet developments prevalent. The general public also followed the governmental policies unconsciously as development could offer chances of employment to them and thus, chances to overcome poverty.

As the result of the development-oriented policies, the following ecological problems have been caused in South Korea. First, injudicious land development was carried out consistently through those projects to build cities, industrial parks, resorts with golf links, various roads, and harbors. Abusive development and further exploitation of the land have resulted in fundamental transformations in the ecological environment of the country. A considerable portion of the land was dedicated to meet the goals of development and growth and, consequently, the ecosystems of the forests and the foreshores have been destroyed easily.

Second, mass production and mass consumption have become a part of daily life in South Korea. The development and growth-oriented policies changed the South Korean production-consumption structure. In other words, successful economic growth was made possible at the cost of different natural resources, water resources and energy resources. For example, in the case of petroleum, South Korea is the fifth largest importing country in the world, and it is ninth in terms of the total exhaust amount of greenhouse gases. In terms of wood, South Korea is the second largest importing country

[34] Hyong Geun Yun, "Hanguk-ui saengtae danmon-gwa saengmyeong undong" (Ecological Discourses and the Life Movement in Korea), *Gyegan sasang* (Ideas Quarterly; Academy of Social Sciences) 59 (Winter 2003), 96-99.

in the world, following Japan.[35] The process of mass production and mass consumption has brought out diverse and complex ecological problems.

Third, due to consistent urbanization and industrialization, every city has certain problems of environmental pollution. The overgrowth of the capital area is indeed a serious problem that South Korea is confronted with. South Korea might be the only country where about 47% of the entire population is concentrated in the environs of the capital, as well as are all the structures and functions of the political, economic, social, cultural, and educational fields.[36] As might be expected, a consequence of this concentration is that all the cities in the area are suffering from traffic-related pollution, lack of green vegetation, and difficulties of securing safe drinking water, and a secure hygienic refuse disposal system. The industrial parks in South Korea are also confronted with the predicament of air pollution and toxic wastes.

Fourth, although it is one of the biggest energy-consuming countries in the world, South Korea has not made much effort to prevent climate change. The country produces the ninth largest amount of greenhouse gases in the world.[37] The overconsumption of fossil energy means the mass exhaust of air pollutants. Nevertheless, the country does not pay sufficient attention to find alternatives.

Lastly, South Korea has 21 nuclear plants and is the second-largest country in Asia to follow an electric energy policy that is concentrated on nuclear energy. The

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[35] Ibid., 97.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 99.

nuclear plants have been producing a huge amount of radioactive waste, but the country does not have a secure permanent disposal site yet and the South Korean government continues to build even more nuclear power plants. The nuclear energy issue, especially the problems with radioactive waste disposal sites, has been one of the biggest ecological problems in South Korea for the last two decades.

As they have been exposed to various types of environmental pollution caused by abusive land development, the mass production and mass consumption structure, and rapid urbanization and industrialization, Koreans are now increasingly demanding safe drinking water, pollution-free food, and clean air for a healthy life. The South Korean government, nonetheless, has stated its will to revive the country's economy and is enforcing large-scaled development projects: the Saemangeum Reclamation Project[38] which destroy the foreshore mud-field, the construction of the radioactive waste disposal site which is conditioned with further construction of nuclear plants, the construction of roads which destroys the forest ecosystem, and the construction of large-scale dams to obtain more water resources.

The government will also accelerate the development of the capital area, the construction of new golf course which will damage the forest ecosystem, and the

[38] The Saemanguem Reclamation Project proposed building a 33 km dike, to reclaim 28,300 ha of wetlands and estuary for rice production. In addition, the project would store 530 million tons of freshwater in the estuary for agriculture. The time frame for this construction was 21 years from 1991 to 2011 with a budget of USD 2.1 billion. During the project, another reclamation project, called the "Shiwha Reclamation Project," which was established between 1987 and 1994, was written off as a failure and an ecological disaster. The public has started to recognize the value of wetlands and coastal waters and has strongly opposed the Saemanguem Reclamation Project. However, the voices of supporters for the project were also strong, so its resolution was controversial.

construction of tourist and resort towns. Both the central government and the local self-governing bodies have special sectors concerning ecological problems and spend a considerable portion of their budget on them. The government seems to emphasize harmony among humans, nature, and development and says that it will carry out policies for "sustainable development" as adopted at the UN conference; however, its actual policies still aim at economic growth and development.

The South Korean government is carrying out so-called "end of pipe" administration, i.e., the *ex post facto* measures, instead of planning preventive measures in advance. The environmental policies of the government cannot control huge development projects. It is, thus, very likely that the ecological problems that our generation is experiencing now will continue in the future, as the development-oriented policies will have serious influences on nature and ecosystem. For this reason, an effective Korean socioecological ethics is required to carry out the struggle for a better environment.

Korean Environmental Movement against the Development Dictatorship

Environmental organizations in South Korea have been displaying their struggle against the development-oriented policies of the government, at times through certain provocative tactics such as a sit-down strike in the middle of Seoul and a hunger strike. Major organizations from both the Capital area and local areas are putting together collective efforts to achieve their goals.

The major claim of the environmental movement organizations is that the large-scale development projects being planned will certainly damage nature, and the organizations' major aim is the withdrawal of plans to construct these projects. They have stated that the government should stop the above-mentioned projects: the Saemangeum Reclamation Project, the energy policy dependent on the nuclear energy, the construction of roads, golf courses, and leisure towns that will further the ecological destruction. The environmental movement organizations are demanding that the government reinforce and enforce the regulations and restrictions to preserve nature, and abandon development-oriented policies.

As mentioned above, the history of the environment movement is not lengthy in South Korea. According to Do-Wan Ku, it was only in the early 1960s that the country started its full-out development, and the environment movement came to the front only in the late 1980s.[39] Under the military dictatorship since the 1960s, the authoritative system did not allow any questioning, let alone opposing, on its policies for economic growth and development. With its great power behind it, the dictatorship pushed its development policy. One-directional development propelled with power and authority—this was the so-called developmental dictatorship.[40] The major task of society was to expel the

[39] Do-Wan Ku, "Hanguk hwangyong undong-ui yeoksa-wa mirae" (History and the Future of the Korean Environmental Movement), In *Hanguk hwangkyong dance chongnam* (A Comprehensive Survey of Korean Environmental Associations), 122-131, compiled by the Korea NGO Promotion and the National Network of Environmental Organization of Korea, 2007.

[40] Byeong-Cheon Lee et al. eds., *Developmental Dictatorship and the Park Chung-Hee Era: The Shaping of Modernity in the Republic of Korea* (Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2005), 5.

dictatorial authority and realize democracy in South Korea. The ecological problems could not attract enough attention as a major social issue.

Most environmental organizations started to be formed themselves only when the political society became democratized in the late 1980s. The general public also started to claim their ecological right as their basic right because they were faced with severe ecological problems. Before and after 1990, for example, several cases of large-scale water contamination were reported one by one. The mass media headlined the cases, and drew the public's attention to these issues. By the time of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992, ecological issues had drawn much attention from international society. South Korea was not exceptional and its nongovernmental organizations sought international solidarity to deal with ecological problems at the global level.[41]

With the vision of the "Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development" which was agreed upon at the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development Conference, the organizations started to put the brake on development-oriented policies. At the moment, more than 500 environmental organizations are visibly active in every corner of the country, forming a nationwide network. The organizations have expanded at high speed since the early 1990s when there were only ten organizations.

The Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM) was founded in April 1993. This relatively short history was, however, preceded by a decade-long history of environmental movement. Yul Choi, a democratic movement leader in Kangwon

[41] Do-Wan Ku, "The Structural Change of the Korean Environmental Movement," Seoul National University, *Korean Journal of Population and Development* (Vol.25 No.1. 1996), 156.

National University, was later imprisoned for his activism against the dictatorial government during the late 1970s. When in prison for six years, he read extensively about ecological issues. After he was released, he founded the first environmental NGO in South Korea, the Korean Research Institute of Environmental Problems (KRIEP), in response to widespread pollution caused by the nation's rapid industrialization. The Institute inspired people to demand their rights to a healthy environment. It succeeded in evacuating communities of 40,000 people affected by an illness caused by toxic wastes from a nonferrous metal industrial complex in the coastal city of Onsan.[42]

Ecological issues have become critical strongholds in the democracy movement that paved the way for a civilian government. In 1988, KRIEP was merged with two other environmental groups and established the Korean Anti-Pollution Movement Association (KAPMA) and Choi became the president of this organization. KAPMA actively participated in every ecological issue from 1988 to 1992. It fought against the government's attempts to construct nuclear waste storage sites, the dust contamination from coal briquette plants, the destruction of mountains to make golf courses, and the reclamation of coastal tidal flats. Since South Korea is highly dependent upon nuclear power, KAPMA informed the Korean public about the problems with nuclear power plants and nuclear waste disposal. Tens of thousands of people participated in rallies and signed petitions protesting the construction of new nuclear plants and nuclear waste storage sites. In 1990, a demonstration of around 20,000 people stopped a nuclear waste facility plan in Anmyon Island. In 1991, KAPMA organized massive campaigns to

[42] Ibid., 161.

protest the toxic spill from an electronic company that contaminated drinking water of two million people in Daegu. This incident served as a warning to government and industry of the people's concern for the environment.[43]

In 1993, KAPMA united with seven local environmental groups to launch the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM), Korea's largest environmental organization, and Choi became its secretary general. KFEM has grown to be the biggest and the most influential NGO in Korea, with its 85,000 members and 47 local branches working on various types of ecological issues.[44] Acting as an information clearing house, it collects studies and disseminates information on global trends to Korean society and to NGOs throughout the region. KFEM also acts as a role model to other East and Southeast Asian country NGOs by sharing their experience.

Since 1998, KFEM has organized more international conferences and exchange programs with NGOs from other countries, particularly those in Asia. It is hoped that the cooperation with other environmental groups in Asia will foster stronger international bonds leading to more effective cooperative action on Asian and global ecological issues. Additionally, KFEM has been involved in many social issues, such as poverty, human rights, and women's rights. KFEM raised these issues to Korean and International Society participating in the NGO Forum on Women in Beijing, 1995; World Summit for Social Development and NGO Forum in Copenhagen 1995; UN Conference on Human

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[43] Ibid., 166.

[44] Ibid.

Settlements in Istanbul, 1996; and the World Summit for Social Development in Geneva, 2000.[45]

Through this case we can observe a phase of the environmental movements in Korea. Each environmental movement organization has members and it is run with the members' financial support. They have been coping with diverse ecological problems, and different organizations have gotten together and displayed collective activities, faced with important ecological issues.

Major examples of environmental movement in South Korea include following issues. First, the struggle against the construction of nuclear plant and radioactive waste disposal sites. Since the late 1980s, environmental movement organizations have demanded that the government change its energy policy which is very dependent on nuclear power. They have also opposed construction of the radioactive waste disposal site premised on further construction of the nuclear plants. Nevertheless, including the first nuclear plant built in 1978, altogether 21 nuclear plants are in operation at the moment, producing a tremendous amount of radioactive waste. Because of the organizations' struggle against the construction of the radioactive waste disposal site, the government has not been able to select the building site yet. The issue of the nuclear plant and the radioactive waste disposal site is and will remain one of the biggest ecological issues.

Second, the energy saving campaign and the movement to introduce renewable energy has been continued. South Korea is the fifth largest petroleum importing country, and it exhausts the ninth largest amount of greenhouse gases in the world. Diverse actions

[45] Byeong-Cheon Lee et al., 6.

have been taken to change this "environmentally destructive energy policy" into a "sustainable energy policy." The movements to introduce renewable energy, such as solar energy, wind force, heat of the earth, and hydrogen energy, have been continuously carried forward. Faced with the crisis that the fossil energy will be exhausted at the end of the 21st century, Korea and the rest of the world need to search for an alternative energy that can substitute for fossil and nuclear energy.

Third, there have been consistent movements to protect and preserve the mud flats on the foreshore. The Saemangum preservation movement carried out since the late 1990s provides a good example of the struggle against the one-sided development policy of the government. The western and southern coastlines of South Korea have one of the four major mud flats in the world. The mud flats, however, have been considerably reduced due to the reclamation projects of the government since the 1960s.[46] Most of the reclaimed lands have been turned into farmlands, industrial lands, or cities. As the ecological values and importance of mud flats are recognized, the environmental movement organizations in South Korea started to prevent any more reclamation. Mud flats are rarely found around the world, and they provide us with a variety of species and marine resources, nature with a purifying system, and water birds with a suitable habitat.

Fourth, the environmental organizations have also carried out the movement against dam constructions and the reviving river campaigns. Due to the different development projects such as building cities, industrial parks and farmlands, the amount of water required has increased rapidly. To ensure the supply for daily water consumption,

[46] Ibid., 67.

industrial water and agricultural water, the government has built dams up the rivers. Consequently, the amount of waste water increased, and the construction of dams resulted not only in the water contamination but also in the destruction of the ecosystem of rivers.

Indeed, several cases of contaminated tap water and rivers have drawn much community attention. Among them, the Lee Administration's Four Major Rivers Project is regarded as the worst ecological catastrophe. Recognizing the ecological crises caused by this massive project, many environmental organizations have been displaying campaigns against the dam and canal construction, and for the preservation of the ecosystem of Korean major rivers.

In addition to the above-mentioned movements and campaigns, Korean environmental organizations have been coping with the ecological problems through campaigns to reduce and recycle wastes, to encourage green consumption and green transport, and to build the green city or the ecological polis. The organizations have been carrying out diverse public activities and education programs. There have been also very active international solidarity events in the field of the environmental movement.

For the Sustainable Future

The 21st century is said to be the era of ecology. This expression implies that the 20th century was an epoch of ecological destruction, and the 21st century should be a time to resolve the problem. It also denotes that we, human beings, will have a future only if we overcome the ecological crisis. Many people have been warning us that if the

ecological destruction continues at the current speed, the future of the world will be a tragedy. This can be easily demonstrated with the global warming phenomenon. If the global warming increases, the unusual changes of climate will also continue and the damages from drought, flood, tsunami, and typhoons will be accelerated. The glaciers on the polar areas will melt, causing a sea level rise. This, at the end, will have a direct influence on agricultural activities.

The UN is recommending every country to aim to build an environmentally sound and sustainable society, as the destructive development policies of the 20th century should not be continued.[47] Nonetheless, most developed countries including South Korea are still carrying out the "unsustainable" development policies which give priority to the accumulation of the national wealth. In the case of South Korea, the "unsustainable" development policies can be observed in its land uses, energy policy, and economic growth policy. South Korea, in a word, will continue to sacrifice its natural environment and ecosystem and therefore its people for its economy. This will be the same in the countries of the Third World. The environmental organizations, however, are making sure that they will continue to carry out movements to overcome the ecological crisis and to build a sustainable future. One of their major efforts is to carry out the struggle against the South Korean government to change its perspective and consciousness. The unsustainable development policy, if continued, will further the ecological destruction, and eventually kill off life on Earth. Ecological destruction is life destruction, the deprivation of our most basic right. To secure a safe and peaceful ground of life for our

[47] See-Jae Lee, "Environmental Movement and Its Political Empowerment," Korean National Commission for UNESCO, *Korea Journal* (vol.40, No.3. 2000), 131.

generation and the next generation, i.e., to secure our "sustainable future," a more effective socioecological movement should be carried on.

Perspectives on Nature and the Korean Socioecological Alternative Movement

Perspectives on Nature

The theory of perspectives was developed by Professor John Adams at University College London. He indicates that "we must note that these perspectives are part of a model described in social science. Alternatives to this view of interactions between humans and nature exist and it can therefore not be viewed as absolute."[48] Adams describes four types of perceptions of nature, which he calls "myths of nature."[49] Each myth can be represented graphically by a sphere rolling in a landscape. The first myth is called "nature benign." This means that nature is very robust and responds well to human-made disturbances; always returning to its natural state. The second myth is "nature ephemeral." This expresses that nature is fragile and does not respond well to human-made disturbances; when disturbance is caused, nature will not automatically return to its natural state. The third myth is called "nature perverse/tolerant." This basically denotes that nature can tolerate disturbances up to a certain degree. If disturbances are small, nature will return to equilibrium. Larger disturbances pose a threat to nature functioning. The fourth myth is "nature capricious." This essentially indicates

[48] John Adams, *Risk: The Policy Implications of Risk Compensation and Plural Rationalities* (London, UK: Routledge, 2001), 58.

[49] Ibid., 34.

that nature is random and unpredictable and we will never know exactly how it will respond to disturbances.[50]

The myths of nature can be applied to a person's perception of nature. This implies that a person with a nature benign perception would not want us to act upon ecological crisis, believing that nature itself will restore its natural balance. On the contrary, a person with a nature ephemeral perception would speak of ecological crisis, as a "doom-scenario" which we must resolve, otherwise nature will be seriously disturbed beyond restoration. A person with a nature perverse perception would want some action to be taken, but is not as extreme as an ephemeral type, nor as optimistic as a benign type. A person with a nature capricious perception would not want us to act upon ecological crisis because nature cannot be predictable.[51]

These four myths of nature divide people up in four distinct types by perception. First, *nature benign* types are commonly known as individualists. These are self-seeking people relatively free from control by others, who want to control the environment around them and the people in it. Being mostly economists or economics-oriented, the individualists emphasize wealth as an important determinant of their happiness. The USA is a typical example of a country that is governed individualistically. Second, *nature ephemeral* types are commonly known as egalitarians. These people have strong group loyalties and act solely upon the rules imposed on them by nature. Democracy is an important political term for egalitarians. They often join environmental pressure groups

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[50] Ibid., 34-36.

[51] Ibid.

in order to influence politics. Some Greenpeace activists may be typical egalitarians. Third, *nature perverse/tolerant* types are commonly known as hierarchists. These are characterized by compromising, binding prescriptions and clear social relations. It is typical for a hierarchist to try to solve an ecological problem by introducing boundaries for emissions of pollutants and other ecological threats. The Netherlands is a typical example of a country that is governed hierarchically. Fourth, *nature capricious* types are commonly known as fatalists. They do not participate in political discussions on the environment because they simply believe no one knows exactly what will happen in the future. They have minimal control over their own lives and often see no point in trying to change their fate. People in developing countries may be fatalists because they have no control over the quality of their own lives.[52] Among these types, Korea is now in the middle of transition from *nature capricious* types to *nature benign* types, so most Koreans are confronting the dilemma between economic growth and sustainability.

Korean Socioecological Alternative Movement

Thanks to the opening of the political opportunity structure after 1987,[53] the environmental movement has rapidly grown in South Korea. This led to the expansion of ecological consciousness throughout the country. Even in the midst of economic crisis,

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[52] Ibid., 34-36.

[53] In Korea, since the 1960s, civil right movements have constantly opposed authoritarian regimes, and in June 1987, nationwide massive demonstrations and protests by students as well as ordinary citizens triggered the transition to a democratic regime.

people's interest in and support for ecological consciousness has continued in a relatively consistent manner.

However, as the development of socio-economic democracy stagnated in the mid-2000s, the environmental movement also had to face many difficulties.[54] It caused the institutionalization of the mainstream environmental groups, which resulted in weakening their reformative spirit. On the other hand, the counter-environmental movement proliferated with conservatives. Besides, neo-liberalism has become prevailing in Korean society, thereby weakening people's environment-oriented values. Since the 1990s, the mainstream environmental groups pursued strategies to green the state and society in a top-down manner through the ecological reform of the capitalist state, but it achieved only partial success.

Korea's democratization process after 1987 can be roughly summarized as its success in political and systemic democratization and its failure in social, economic, cultural, and ecological democratization. The model of promoting democracy in the manner of enlightenment by reforming the state, with a focus on Seoul, in a top-down fashion underwent a great turnabout in 1997 and finally suffered a setback in 2007.[55]

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[54] Byeong-Cheon Lee et al. eds, 48.

[55] The former conservative president Lee Myung-bark's major policy was the Four Rivers Project which is the most serious ecological catastrophe in all of Korean history. The environmental movement played a part in torpedoing one of the most grandiose public works schemes in recent decade, the Pan Korea Grand Waterway. Proposed in December 2007 by President Lee Myung-bark — the former Hyundai Construction CEO nicknamed the "Bulldozer" — the waterway was to have been a super canal system with the 336-mile-long main canal connecting Seoul to Busan. Cargo freighters would have gone up Korea's longest river, the Nakdong, floating through flooded mountain tunnels to connect to the Han River, which eventually winds through Seoul. South Korea's four main rivers, the Han, Nakdong, Guem and the Youngsan, were to be heavily dredged, channelized and fitted with locks and dams. Seventeen

Already from the 1990s, criticism has been extended to this model of top-down democratization without reflection and participation from the bottom-up. This critical reflection was initiated by the environmental movement and the life (生命, 생명, *saeng-myung*) and peace movement, which are differentiated from the mainstream environmental movement but can be placed under the category of an environmental movement in a broader sense.

Do-Wan Ku calls the movement of such a trend an "ecological alternative movement."[56] According to Ku, the ecological alternative movement focuses on "ecology" rather than on "environment," since it seeks to go beyond anthropocentrism and pursues alternatives to industrialism and statism. It can be referred to as a "socioecological alternative movement" in that it seeks to change existing socioecological systems and pursues new alternatives. This movement is different from the former environmental movement in many aspects such as its value system, resource mobilization methods, and the actors of the movement.

Ku attempts to analyze the characteristics of the social movements that seek ecological alternatives in the present situation where the top-down democratization model faces crisis and accordingly the mainstream environmental movement based on such model is confronted by a difficult situation. He also seeks to clarify the causes for the

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other smaller canals were added to the plan for a total of 1,926 miles of rivers to be transformed into slow-water canals. The canal scheme was too much, even for Korea. The former president's proposal was met with a groundswell of opposition from critics who said it would be an environmental catastrophe and a massive boondoggle.

[56] Do-Wan Ku, "The Emergence of Ecological Alternative Movement in Korea" *Korean Social Science Journal* 36 No. 2 (2009), 3.

development of those movements and their theoretical and practical implications. The questions of his research are as follows: (1) What are the characteristics (value system, primary actors, resource mobilization methods and major activities) of the socioecological alternative movement?; (2) What caused the socioecological alternative movement to develop?; and (3) What are the theoretical and political meanings of this movement?[57]

Addressing these questions, Ku aims to explore the possibility of building an alternative society that is ecologically sustainable and socially reciprocal and cooperative beyond the confines of industrialism and capitalism in the 21st century globe, when self-regulating markets are colonizing nature and society. In the face of this serious global ecological crisis, the ecological authoritarians, who rely on authoritarian states, and the liberals, who resort to the control of markets to deal with the crisis, will raise their voice. Given this, he examines as well whether a seed for constructing an ecological global community based on bottom-up ecological democracy beyond anti-democratic discourses is sprouting in the socioecological alternative movement of Korea.[58]

As mentioned above, the Korean environmental movement was touched off by pollution victims' protests. Based on these protests, a democratic anti-pollution movement began to develop in Korea in the 1980s, and was inherited by some of the environmental movement groups that made their appearance in the 1990s. After the 1990s, the mainstream environmental groups and the mainstream environmental NGOs

[57] Ibid., 4.

[58] Ibid., 8.

underwent the process of institutionalization.[59] That is, they began to seek memberships, regularly raise membership fees and donations, and receive in part governmental assistance, while conducting a movement for enacting laws concerning environment and policy reform, as well as various activities such as development deterrence, public relations, and education, thus setting the frame of their resource mobilization methods. And in the 1990s, the resistant or left-environmentalist ideology, which was prevalent in the 1980s, rapidly was swept under the rug in exchange for new discourses of the environmental movement, such as sustainable development and environment management. Whereas some of the anti-pollution groups in the 1980s sought radical and socialist alternatives, the mainstream environmental groups in the 1990s focused on managing capitalism and industrialism in an eco-friendly way.[60] This trend has been continuing since the 2000s. These mainstream environmental groups launched an "advocacy movement," which put pressure primarily on the central or local government through opposition to development or opposition to enactment.

After the 1990s, the mainstream environmental groups adopted such realistic environmentalist strategies, thereby expanding their influence on the mass. As a result of this, they succeeded in forcing the government to give up plans to construct a dam on the

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[59] Korean mainstream environmental movement has started as a social movement held by professional environmental organizations, which attempts to change social systems by putting pressure on the government and enterprises with the aim to solve environmental problems. The Korea Federation for Environmental Movement, Green Korea United and the Citizens' Movement for Environmental Justice are representative mainstream environment organizations.

[60] Ku, "The Emergence of Ecological Alternative Movement in Korea", 11.

Dong River,[61] and made a great contribution to the establishment of resource recycling policies. This contributed, above all, to expanding the ecological consciousness among people. However, by adopting such realistic strategies, and to be concrete, by forming a "governance system" in consultation with important decision-makers of the government, enterprises and the media, the mainstream environmental movement lost its own driving force to reform society outside the existing social system, which is represented by capitalism and industrialism. The main cause for such transformation lies in changes in the political opportunity structure, such as changes in the ideological topology, reshuffle of social forces, and expansion of the openness of the political regime.[62]

Unlike the mainstream environmental movement, the socioecological alternative movement started as a movement pursuing alternatives that fundamentally surpass industrial paradigms. In the 1980s, the anti-pollution movement sought eco-friendly socialism beyond capitalism by combining socialism and environmentalism, while the socioecological alternative movement pursued communities that go beyond industrialism. With the democratization in 1987, activities to transform ecologically people's life and

[61] On 5 June 2000, President Kim Dae Jung announced the cancellation of the plan to build a dam on the Dong River. President Kim said, "the plan to build the Youngwol Dam is cancelled to protect endangered species and the ecosystem there." Korean citizens welcomed his decision. It was residents of Youngwol who started the fight to protect the beautiful nature and rare species in the area of the Dong River. As 33 representatives from various sectors spent 33 days and nights telling people how to fight to preserve the Dong River in the front yard of KFEM headquarters office in 1999, the movement expanded throughout Korea. More than 2,500 citizens from all over Korea visited the KFEM office where the campaign was carried out. The movement to save the Dong River grew beyond environmental groups to encompass religious groups, academic and social groups, and international environmental groups, like World Watch Institute, Green Peace International, Sierra Club, and FOE International. The citizens who fought to save the Dong River and their descendants will always remember 5 June 2000, whenever they see beautiful nature around the Dong River.

[62] Ku, "The Emergence of Ecological Alternative Movement in Korea," 18.

culture were launched. The "Hansalim Manifesto," proclaimed in 1989, is an important text that systematizes the basic ideas of the socioecological alternative movement.[63] This movement is conducted in various forms such as direct transactions of organic agricultural products, consumers cooperative societies, ecological communities, the "return to rural communities" (歸農, 귀농, *gwinong*) movement, Local Exchange Trading System (LETS), and social enterprises, and is also deployed under various names such as life movement, *salim* (살림, life-giving) movement, life and peace movement, and community movement. This movement is called a "socioecological alternative movement" because it pursues new alternatives to existing industrial and market paradigms, emphasizing harmonious coexistence and communication with nature and society.

The discourses of the socioecological alternative movement began to spread in Korea around the early 1990s, but not as rapidly as those of the mainstream environmental movement. Because this movement seeks small-scale, slow, and bottom-up changes, unlike the mainstream environmental movement that pursues large-scale, rapid, and top-down changes, its discourses cannot but spread relatively slowly. However, when the mainstream environmental movement cannot afford to try new reforms, being caught in the trap of institutionalization following its rapid growth, the socioecological alternative movement began to sow the seeds for change. Since the 2000s, the number of consumers' cooperative societies has rapidly increased and alternative communities were

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[63] Hansalim, *Hansalim Seoneon* (Hansalim Manifesto) (Seoul: Hansalim Press, 1989), 1.

formed in both rural and urban areas, while grass-roots organizations, such as medical cooperative societies, have also been increasing. This movement seeks to create alternatives to mainstream paradigms centered on the state, markets, and industries, and to realize them in reality not through mere declaration but through transformation of people's daily life, conduct, values, consciousness, and culture.

Hansalim and Korean Life Thought

The wellspring of the Hansalim (한살림)[64] movement is a cooperation movement that started in the Wonju camp.[65] Following the great flood around the Namhan River in 1972, the residents in Wonju started a movement to develop rural areas in Gangwon Province under the leadership of Jang Il-sun. They campaigned for production cooperation, credit cooperation, cooperation for joint use of tools and machines, and consumption cooperation, which were implemented in the form of cooperation movement, collaboration movement, or village democratization movement. However, they could not enhance the self-sustenance of the region by means of a movement that attempts to achieve development by inviting external input of agricultural machinery, livestock, and capitals. After this experience of failure, members of the Wonju camp launched a

[64] It literally means "the Great Whole Living."

[65] The movement group that carried out democratization activities under the leadership of Jang Il-sun and Bishop Ji Hak-sun in Wonju, the hub-city of the democratization movement in Korea, in the 1970s was called "Wonju camp."

cooperative movement of producers and consumers by cultivating and selling organic agricultural products.[66]

According to Hyong-Geun Yun, it was around the 1980s that the Wonju camp, which had conducted its activities with a focus on the democratization movement, changed its direction to the life movement through self-reflection on its experiences. From 1982, some credit cooperatives and agricultural cooperative associations, which had joined the Wonju camp, started organic agriculture and began direct transactions with urban consumers, who would buy such products.[67] In 1984, the Wonju Consumer Cooperative Society, which was to take charge of direct transactions of organic agricultural products, was established, and in 1986, the society opened a small cooperative "Hansalim Nongsan" in Seoul. Since then, the Hansalim movement began to develop as a life culture movement as well as a consumers' cooperative movement.

The Hansalim Movement: Impacts and Influence

The Hansalim movement, as a life culture movement, originated from the "Hansalim Group." From 1986, such progressive intellectuals as Jang Il-sun, Kim Ji-ha, Choe Hye-seong, Bak Jae-il, Kim Min-gi, and Yun Hyong-geun had more than ten informal gatherings to study community movement and life philosophy, which resulted in the creation of the "Hansalim Group" in October 1989. Upon its foundation, the group issued the "Hansalim Manifesto."

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[66] Ku, 2007, 84.

[67] Yun, 104.

The thought of the Hansalim movement, presented in the "Hansalim Manifesto," is a new discourse of life thought that aims to overcome modern industrialism with the life ideology, ecologism, and *Donghak* thought. But the ideology of the Hansalim movement cannot be explained only in terms of the Manifesto, because the Hansalim movement, which was established and developed with the participation of housewives, farmers, and activists, has created new ideologies and values that are different from those in the Hansalim Manifesto. According to Yun, bio-regionalism, local autonomy, and reviving agriculture as the root of ecology are as important as the thought the Hansalim Group.[68]

Hansalim places great emphasis on the community of solidarity, as can be seen in its slogan, "Hansalim tries to ensure that the producers can take responsibility for the life of the consumers, and the consumers, in turn, can take responsibility for the livelihood of the producers."[69] The Hansalim movement aims to create alternative life forms and values, based on this solidarity.

What has Hansalim accomplished? First, unlike the anti-pollution movement, the Hansalim movement succeeded in being established as an alternative life movement in society. The term "life movement" was unfamiliar to many until the early 1990s, but gradually spread and now became a major discourse even in the mainstream environmental movement in Korea.

Second, the Hansalim movement succeeded in establishing an economically sustainable basis for its activities. After setting up its own logistics center in 1996,

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[68] Ibid., 106.

[69] Hansalim, 14.

Hansalim maintained steady growth. As of 2005, a total of sixteen local units were active over the country, and the number of members amounted to 130,000 in 2006, while its sales amounted to 93 billion won and its investments 11.7 billion won. Both the number of its members and its sales had increased by more than 30 percent every year from 2000 till 2004, but since 2005, it has recorded a growth of about 15 percent.[70]

Third, the achievements of Hansalim have impacted the development of other consumers' cooperative societies. According to Yun, as of 2005, there were a total of 115 local consumers' cooperative societies in Korea, including the Hansalim Consumer Cooperative Society as well as the Korean Association of Consumers' Cooperatives, the Doore Association of Consumers' Cooperatives, and the Consumers' Cooperative Society that is under the aegis of the Korean Women Link.[71] These consumers' cooperative societies have served as the prop that supported the organic agricultural products market as well as the locomotive that drove the market forward in an eco-friendly way. Despite this solid basis, consumers' cooperative societies in Korea have had a relatively weak voice in social issues, but they recently began to actively participate in social movements, for example, by taking the lead in the school meals movement as well as in the opposition to the opening of agricultural markets.[72]

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[70] Yun, 112.

[71] Ibid., 116.

[72] Hyong-Geun Yun, "Gyeokdonghaneun yuginong sijang-gwa saenghyeop undong-ui jeonmang" (Turbulent Organic Markets and Prospects of the Cooperative Movement), In *Hanguk hwan gyeong bogoseo 2006* (Annual Report on the Environment in Korea 2006), compiled by the Green Society Research Institute.

Despite these achievements, Hansalim has still some problems to overcome. First, as the Hansalim movement grew in scale, its characteristic as a community movement, which is centered on a face-to-face interaction, began to be weakened. Although increased interest in environmental pollution and health led to the expansion of organic agricultural product markets, this is, for the most part, based on personal or individual interest in health and welfare. That is why the values pursued by Hansalim, which are represented in its "life and solidarity" slogan, in many aspects seem difficult to be expanded in reality.

Second, as the scale of the movement expanded, more focus was placed on distribution than on voluntary communication and cooperation between producers and consumers. In order to compete with the efficiency of markets, decision-making processes and actions similar to, though not quite the same as, those of enterprise bureaucracy are required. If this trend is accelerated, it will make it difficult for the Hansalim movement to maintain its identity as an eco-community movement.

Characteristics of the Socioecological Alternative Movement

As already mentioned above, in South Korea, the mainstream environmental movement has its roots in the democratization movement in the 1970s. This movement combined the resistance ideology of the democratization movement with the issue of "pollution," expanding the ideas of democracy to include thinking about the environment.

For example, the members of the Korean Anti-Pollution Movement Association (1988-1993) considered themselves as democratization activists.[73]

In comparison, the socioecological alternative movement was started out of reflection on the past practice of the democratization movement. Some of the renowned democratization activists in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Jang Il-sun, Kim Ji-ha, and Bak Jae-il, realized the limitations of the struggle-centered approach of the democratization movement, and consequently launched an alternative ecological movement that focused on social cooperation and solidarity, respect for life, and an alternative lifestyle.[74] These efforts resulted in the creation of Hansalim. Their goal was to return life to both nature and people by encouraging rural residents, who were suffering from poverty and illness due to exposure to toxic pesticides, to cultivate organic agricultural products and to directly trade such products with urban consumers. Housewives responsible for the family meals also participated in this initiative for the sake of the health of their children as well as of the farmers in the nation, and this led to the creation of a network of solidarity between rural producers and urban consumers.

After the mid-1990s, grass-roots movements that seek to foster alternative lifestyles by way of consumers' cooperative movements and community movements began to grow. Most of the activists of these movements have been affected by the democratization movement in the 1980 and 1990s. After the failure of the radical socialist movement, many people began to search for a new, more realistic model of movement. In

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[73] Ku, "The Emergence of Ecological Alternative Movement in Korea," 13.

[74] Hansalim, 7.

particular, those activists who fought for the cause of democracy or radical socialism reflected on the past practice of their movement and went off to local areas in pursuit of a new alternative movement. As a result of this, the alternative community movement became active, as shown in the cases of Wonju, Buan, and Siheung.

Unlike these activists, common housewives with no experience of the democratization movement began to participate in the consumers' cooperative movement out of interest in safe food or curiosity for cooperative societies. One leader of Hansalim said that she decided to become a member of the co-op out of curiosity after watching the story about Hansalim on a television show.[75]

As examined above, the socioecological alternative movement has members with various backgrounds. First, activists who tried to overcome the state-centered, capital-centered, and organization-centered movement practices through reflective examination of the democratization movement came to focus on grass-roots cooperation and on the values of life and ecology. Second, farmers engaging in organic agriculture or eco-friendly agriculture are important members of the socioecological alternative movement. Not only the hereditary farmers born in rural areas, but also the new farmers who have relocated from urban areas are actively participating in this movement. Third, housewives are core members of the socioecological alternative movement. The producers' cooperative movement is mostly led by men, but as far as the consumers' cooperative movement is concerned, housewives play a central role in the formation and operation of the movement's organizations. Although the housewives generally began to participate in

[75] Hansalim, 36.

the consumers' cooperative movement out of individual interests, such as food safety, they expanded their movement to incorporate such issues as nature and environment, then building a sense of solidarity with the farmers. Based on this power of cooperation, they attempt to establish an alternative economy in their own community, in the form of a cooperative society like the "Workers' Co-op."

Unlike the mainstream environmental movement, the socioecological alternative movement has as its basic premise opposition to industrialism. The degree of opposition varies according to each person's perspective and interest, but, in general, most leaders of the movement agree that they seek to overcome industrialism and industrial civilization in any way. The "Hansalim Manifesto" declares such socioecological alternative values:

> The obsession for growth, as a result, has made capitalism and communism alike. Both have pursued only economic growth and technological progress, consequently strengthening centralized monitoring and control by technical bureaucrats and intensifying economic conflicts. This also led to social imbalance, bringing about the degeneration of the environment and the exhaustion of natural resources.[76]

This life thought was combined with other ideas such as *Donghak* philosophy, Lao-Tzu's philosophy, and Buddhist philosophy, not to mention Western ecological philosophy, and developed into a socioecological alternative philosophy.[77] Through the

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[76] Hansalim, 15.

[77] The reason for this fusion can be explained in two ways. First, there is similarity in Buddhism, Daoism, and Deep ecology in terms of ecocentric thoughts, naturalism such as "leaving nature as it is" or "mother nature." Second, alternative socio-ecologists who were originally sympathetic to Asian and Korean ecocentric thoughts adopted western ecological

1990s, discourses critical of industrial growth gradually spread in Korean society. The ideal of the socioecological alternative movement is expressed in such catch phrases as "a society of voluntary poverty and coexistence" and "a circular society."

The socioecological alternative movement usually employs systems and methodologies different from those of the mainstream environmental movement. The latter movement attempts to achieve its avowed goals through advocacy and promotion activities, whereas the socioecological alternative movement pursues alternatives in people's everyday life. In this respect, this movement is a movement in which civil society itself seeks to develop an alternative culture and life-style, rather than criticizing and making demands upon the state and enterprises. The main methodology of the movement is to make a change of life through the creation of consensus. The most important thing needed to change the world governed by industrial civilization and capitalist values is each individual's awakening. This is why the change of consciousness through education as well as the change of sensitivity through experience is considered as an important objective in the socioecological alternative movement.

In this line, various activities focusing on restoring humans' social nature, such as community building and village building have been conducted. Cooperative organizations like Hansalim formed a consumers' council as well as a producers' council, and created a community through small group meetings, such as neighborhood meetings (반상회, *bansanghoe*) usually consisting of around five households.

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thoughts such as deep ecology (Arne Naess) or social ecology (Murray Bookchin), when they recognized the seriousness of ecological degradation and industrialism.

The "beacon cooperative societies," which started at Bucheon YMCA, have formed communities centering on the unit called "beacon," and based on these communities, formed autonomous urban communities. These movement methods are employed in many regional YMCAs, including the Gwangmyeong YMCA. In Wonju, cooperative societies in various sectors such as medical, senior care, culture and education, for example like the Wonju Cooperative Society (dealing with organic agricultural products) and the Balgeum Credit Cooperative, established a consultative committee between themselves, and thus they contributed to the development of cooperative living networks in local areas. In Asan, the producers belonging to Hansalim are testing an alternative development model that is ecological, sustainable, and socially and economically advantageous, with the objective of establishing local ecological circulation networks.[78]

Development of Korean Socioecological Alternative Movement

The Korean socioecological alternative movement began to burgeon in the 1990s, and has spread across the nation since the end of the 1990s. This section examines this movement with regard to the structural changes following the economic crisis at the end of 1997, which led Korean society to be reorganized centering on markets.

First, the current neo-liberal globalization appeared in the 1990s and has acted as a structural power that has controlled the economy, society, culture, and politics of Korea since the late 1990s. The foreign exchange crisis of Korea in 1997 played a decisive role

[78] Ku, 2007, 122.

in steering the current of globalization into the direction of neo-liberalism. The Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations[79] focused national resources on accelerating this trend, although they provided a partial improvement in welfare policies. The discourses of "competition and efficiency" began to surpass those of "equity and justice." The strategy of "enhancing national competitiveness" in face of neo-liberal globalization became the power that defines the social structure of contemporary Korean society. This means that the power of "self-regulating markets" came to overwhelm the state, society, and nature. It is in this context of expansion of neo-liberalism that those who attempt to defend and restructure our daily life are carrying out the socioecological alternative movement.[80]

Second, the failure of "socialist states" caused many people to doubt and critically examine the state-centered model of resistance against capitalism. Some took a realist path, such as the mainstream environmental movement, while others began to explore socioecological alternatives. For example, a cooperative movement leader in Wonju said that with the collapse of Eastern European socialism, he began to make a critical reflection on the revolutionary socialist movement in which he had been actively involved in the 1980s. He views both socialism and capitalism as being based on growth-centrism as well as on state-centrism, but the only difference, in his view, is that socialism is defined by state-ownership whereas capitalism is predicated on private ownership. He concluded neither one can give hope to humanity and thus came to seek a

[79] These two administrations spanned from 1998 to 2008.

[80] Yun, 2005, 25.

new hope in cooperative societies or rural communities.[81] The failure of state-centered socialism became a turning point for the development of the socioecological alternative movement with an anarchist tint.

Third, "the small success and the large failure" of the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations, which had social democratic inclinations, expanded people's interest in the socioecological alternative movement. Since the inception of the Kim Dae-jung administration, democracy was steadily institutionalized in Korea, and the post-authoritarian strategies of the Roh Moo-hyun administration accelerated this process. However, excessive annihilation of authoritarianism led to loss of authority and legitimacy, consequently undermining the basis of democracy. Although procedural democratization was realized, the degree of the people's satisfaction with democracy was rather lowered. As the top-down reform failed not only to complete democracy but also to make any progress in ecology, people began to take interest in building new communities in a voluntary, bottom-up manner.

Fourth, the civil social movement, which had once exerted great influence in Korean society due to the success of the blacklisting (against corrupt politicians) campaign by the Citizens' Coalition for the General Election (CCGE) in 2000, began gradually to lose its influence after the inauguration of the Roh Moo-hyun administration in 2003.[82] Besides, conservative or old guard organizations were resurrected in a new, changed form, leading to growing conflicts within civil society. As a result, the public

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[81] Ku, 2007, 134.

[82] Yun, 2005, 36.

sphere became lethargic and the legitimacy of civil society was accordingly undercut. The solidarity among the labor movement, the farmers' movement, and the civil social movement was weakened, and the mainstream environmental movement also faced a setback.[83]

The changes in Korea's political opportunity structure after the end of the 1990s can be summarized as follows. Greater political openness increased the opportunities for various social groups to represent their values and interests, while weakening the solidarity of social groups that are capable of transforming society. Difference was widened within the civil society, while solidarity for reform and change became loosened. In contrast, the solidarity of conservative groups was rather strengthened. "The expansion of the openness of the political regime and the weakening of the solidarity of reformist groups,"[84]served as structural conditions for the decline of the mainstream environmental movement and for the gradual expansion of the socioecological alternative movement in the 2000s. In sum, the failure of markets and the accompanying failure of governments to regulate markets, along with the failure of the "progressive" civil society organizations to present new alternatives, led to the development of the socioecological alternative movement.

I explained the success and failure of neo-liberalism, and the failure of old socialism and reformative administrations and progressive civil society as the background

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[83] Ibid., 38.

[84] Ku, 2007, 137.

of the advent of the socioecological alternative movement. Why has this movement proliferated, and not the other movement? First, this movement is based on community. People who suffer from systematic pressure such as economic competition and threats against life such as food contamination are eager to find a safe community. Though contemporary citizens live their daily life in modern socio-economic system, they want community in which social trust, subjective well-being, and so on can be achieved. Though state socialism, a social welfare state, and progressive civil society can be alternatives to the neo-liberal system, when they fail the socioecological alternative movement can be a new alternative. Second, this movement is based on life and region. Housewives can share their everyday life and narratives in co-op shops. They can build solidarity among organic farmers, consumers, and nature. Though an issue-attention cycle is relatively short, life on the basis of region is long lasting.[85] Third, this movement is based on face-to-face relationships. The trust on the basis of face-to-face relationship and moral values such as ecology and cooperation are essential resources for the co-op and community movements. Because of this broad and thick trust network, the socioecological alternative movement can survive in a market system.

Evaluation of Korean Socioecological Alternative Movement

One of the notable features of the socioecological alternative movement is that it succeeded in creating environmental cooperative organizations on a regional basis. Such organizations are transforming people's lives in ecologically sound ways and promoting

[85] Hansalim, 46.

the socio-economic sustainability of the movement. Without relying on exchange markets too much, they are creating economically viable, eco-friendly communities by creating the conditions in which human societies can coexist with the Earth. According to Yun, these experiments show a marked difference from "top-down environmentalism," "metropolis-oriented environmentalism," or "press-oriented environmentalism."[86] The socioecological alternative movement does not have the hollow sound of a large bell: "environment without everyday life."[87] The alternative communities present hope for a sustainable future.

However, there are some criticisms against the socioecological alternative movement. The consumers' cooperative movement may seem to be an individualistic economic activity. Critics say that the alternative movement merely "complemented" the old regime, without presenting an alternative to it, because the increase of members of cooperative communities does not mean that it ensured socioecological alternatives.[88] Other critics denounce it as "middle-class movement" that just helps the wealthy people enjoying healthful diets.[89] As the economic sustainability assumes greater importance, it tends to lose its character as a social movement, thus degenerating into a sort of business.

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[86] Yun, 2005, 48.

[87] Ibid., 49.

[88] Ibid., 55.

[89] Ku, 2007, 141.

Politically radical people even call the movement "social reformism," "anchoretism,"[90] or "isolationism." As the movement takes a populist approach, the voices criticizing it as "reformism," "middle-class movement," and "commercialization" get stronger.[91] If it emphasizes the anti-capital, anti-industry and anti-state principles, on the other hand, it runs the risks of degenerating into anchoretism, isolationism, and fundamentalism. The socioecological alternative movement has aspects of both a new alternative to the dominant paradigm and of an apolitical isolationism or reformism. How should we interpret these conflicting aspects? This question should be examined in terms of alternative discourses and practices regarding the capital, industry, and state. This is facilitated by asking key questions as follows.

First: Is the Korean socioecological alternative movement an alternative to capitalism? The movement has the purpose of overcoming capitalism, in that it aims to go beyond the exchange relations based on exchange value in the currency economy. However, the movement cannot but rely on capitalist markets if it is to maintain the economic sustainability of the cooperatives or communities in the global capitalist system. It attempts to improve the logistics system or increase food mileage in order to raise productivity.[92] To sell more, it is forced to turn to growth- and efficiency-oriented

[90] The practice or mode of life of an anchorite who is in hermit (especially those of the Eastern deserts) or recluse, withdrawing from the world for religious reasons. It originated in the beginning of 4th century.

[91] Ku, 2007, 146.

[92] Yun, 51.

management. It is almost impossible to break with the current economic system that depends on fossil fuels and to form a self-sustaining economic community in Korea.

However, the movement has fundamental differences from the capitalist production-consumption system, in that it makes connections between producers and consumers beyond the capitalist commodity-currency relationships, through cooperative organizations. It also has a marked difference from capitalist governance as it forges social and democratic governance through consultations between producers and consumers based on the democratic principle of "one person, one vote." In short, the movement may be called "a non-capitalist alternative operating in the capitalist market economy."[93] Such an alternative system is in peril of degeneration and vitiation under the influence of the capitalist competition system. Nevertheless, cooperation and mutual trust among the participants in the movement could raise the possibility of strengthening reciprocal social relationships. It shows that the success of alternative community depends upon cooperation and the mutual trust of the community members.

Second: Is the Korean socioecological alternative movement an alternative to industrialism? The ecological Hansalim Manifesto calls for an ecological culture of living against the industrial, machinery civilization. Ku affirms that the ecological journal *Noksaek pyeongnon* (Green Review) upholds poor and sharing communities of small farms as an ideal society.[94] Overcoming industrialism holds grave importance in such discourses. Participants in the socioecological alternative movement cherish pro-

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[93] Ku, 2007, 141.

[94] Ibid., 144.

ecological production, consumption, leisure and culture, with organic farming and the production of organic products and pro-ecological goods remaining the main goals of the movement. The socioecological alternative movement is aimed at transcending the industry-based development model in the modern era.

The means to transcend the modern development model are varied. Some of the proponents of the alternative movement dream of a small farming society in their nostalgia for the pre-modern communities, while others pursue the ecological alternative development model without excluding technologies as a means of their struggle. What is certain is that both of them share the recognition that industrialism relying on fossil fuels is ecologically unsustainable. Therefore, they pay much attention to the measures to develop and inseminate ecological technologies for solar power systems, passive houses, and biomass and bio-diesel fuels. However, there still is an immense gap between discourses and practices surrounding anti-industrialism.

Third: Is the Korean socioecological alternative movement an alternative to the state? The activists of the alternative movement have no single position on the state. Some of them call for a welfare system operated by communities instead of the state-operated welfare programs, while others argue for a measure to strengthen the state welfare system. There are also many cases of direct or indirect state subsidies to the alternative movement organizations.[95] However, what should be noted is that they are not state-dependent organizations but autonomous ones based on their own cooperative ties.

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[95] Yun, 55.

They are working out an ecological, democratic governance to solve problems on their own, remaining independent from the state. There are few cases of the socioecological alternative movement denouncing the state outright. They have the autonomous power, however, to form autonomous communities.

This chapter has examined what kinds of discourses the alternative movement has about capital, industry and the state, and how it puts the discourses into practice. The movement tends to ideologically transcend capital, industry, and the state, but its activities are within the dominant social structure.

Could this movement create an alternative system that transcends capital, industry, and the state through new politics? This vision of an alternative system can be found in the discourses of modern anarchists such as Noam Chomsky and Kojin Karatani. They discuss hopes for global anarchism, which was much vitiated due to the collapse of socialist states. Karatani argues that an association of associations that surpasses the nation state has to have already been formed before it replaces the nation-state.[96]

The gap between the anarchist vision and the socioecological alternative movement of Korea remains wide. The movement has to concentrate on its resources for its economic sustainability and organization of cooperative ties. It is almost impossible to change communities with issues unrelated to or well beyond those in everyday life. The gap might be narrowed by opening a new political arena, based on concrete living conditions. In this stage, however, it is difficult to find a new bud of alternative politics

[96] Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005), 21.

transcending capital, industry, and the state amid the wave of conservatism sweeping all central and local government elections in Korea.

How could the varied and small communities engaging in the socioecological alternative movement form solidarity strong enough to create an alternative political system that surpasses the state power? How could they have the power to transform the structure of capitalism and industrialism? To give answers to these questions in terms of alternative discourses, we might say that we can change the old regime through daily life of production and consumption within a reciprocal and mutually beneficial network. We can imagine a community where the members use the products produced by their own cooperatives, work at the Workers' Collective, get the medical treatment at medical cooperatives, study at alternative schools, hold discussions with neighbors, and the senior members of the community get the assistance from the Workers' Collective. The work for the community may be exchanged as currency of the community. If such communities are increased and develop their ecological and democratic association and solidarity, this would cause the weakening of the capital-industry-state union. This association and solidarity may help reshuffle the local and central governments through elections as well as through ecological production and consumption. This is the vision of the socioecological alternative movement. Isolated individuals are weak, but the communities organized by such individuals with free will are strong. The world would

change if the communities were united into a community of communities and an association of associations.[97]

Conclusion: Toward Ecological Democracy

I have examined the Korean socioecological alternative movement and analyzed its traits. Its major proponents are conscientious pro-democracy activists and ecology-conscious farmers and housewives. It sets high value on the efforts to transcend capitalism, industrialism and state-orientation, and to form a cooperative and mutually beneficial community. It also puts greater emphasis on efforts to spread pro-ecological culture and life through face-to-face relationships, unlike the mainstream environmental movement that seeks a change from above. Furthermore, this movement will contribute to build a Korean socioecological ethics equipped with creation consciousness. Through engagement with *Donghak* ecological ideas and sacramental commons thoughts, this kind of consciousness can be elaborated and developed.

This movement has spread after the late 1990s because the state-driven democracy faced its limitations amid neo-liberal globalization, and civic groups failed to address such problems. In other words, the market, state, and progressive civic circles suffered setbacks as society and nature ended up being colonized by capitalism. In this situation, the ecological and social crisis became structural, causing socio-economic

[97] Much of what I express and for which I hope in this paragraph has been achieved already by the Mondragón Cooperative Movement in Spain's Basque Country, begun in the 1940s by José María Arizmendiarrieta, a Catholic priest. Later, I will describe it as a model to see ways in which my vision and hopes have been realized elsewhere—also in the face of a severe dictatorship under Gen. Francisco Franco like Korean political situation.

polarization and aggravating the destruction of the environment.[98] Given this, it can be said that the socioecological alternative movement was the result of the efforts of community members to defend their own life in the face of the structural failure of the dominant social paradigm.

Toward what does the socioecological movement pursue alternatives? The movement has the ideological purpose of transcending the capital-industry-state union. However, the movement is now focusing its efforts on experimenting and spreading alternative social relationships, which is expected to transcend the tripartite union within the scope of the global capitalist system. It could go no further than to safeguard the community within the old regime because it has yet to secure the resources to overcome the old regime, which has enormous capital, technologies, symbolic tools, culture and violent power.[99] The alternative politics of the socioecological alternative movement is different from that pursued by the model of the old socialist maneuvering, which aimed at seizing power by organizing counter-violence. It also differs from the social democracy that pushes for a reform of the old regime and enables the sharing of power through the development of party politics at the level of the national assembly. The alternative politics pursued by the Korean socioecological movement is aimed at exerting influence on and reforming the old regime through ecological democracy in daily life. It may be

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[98] Ku, 2007, 142.

[99] Yun, 59.

hard to imagine alternative politics such as slow politics or "anti-politics politics."[100] However, the time for change, like the candlelight protests in Korea in 2008,[101] may come sooner than expected. When the socioecological alternative movement, which still remains like an island, reshapes itself into the form of a continent with broad connections, it could accomplish ecological democracy. In the ecological democracy, human beings and creatures would receive due respect not for their ability, but for the value of their existence itself.

In the next chapter, the historical socioecological analysis just presented will be complemented by Korean ecological ethics in the *Donghak* tradition and their relation with Korean socioecological spirituality. From the perspective of socioecological ethics, Korean ecological problems are the results of rapid industrialization and economic development without considering the spiritual value of nature such as interrelatedness, creation consciousness, and sacredness that can be found in *Donghak* tradition; this will be discussed in chapter three.

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[100] Ku, 2007, 149.

[101] The candlelight protests in central Seoul against the resumption of US beef imports due to fears of BSE or 'mad cow disease' began on 2 May 2008 and continued almost daily for more than two months. Tens of thousands of people from all walks of life attended the demonstrations, with at least 100,000 on 10 June, the 21st anniversary of South Korea's pro-democracy movement. The protesters voiced their discontent not only with the US beef trade issue, but with a broad range of President Lee Myung-bark's other policies.

CHAPTER THREE

KOREAN ECOLOGICAL ETHICS IN THE *DONGHAK* TRADITION AND THEIR RELATION WITH KOREAN ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY

Historical Background and Development of the *Donghak* Tradition

New scientific thought emerging in the West urges a fundamental change in our view of Earth. Scientists such as James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis argue that Earth is "Gaia," a gigantic body of life itself (or at least a planet that appears to act as if it were living) where all forms of life are connected in an intricate web. This organic worldview, whether understood literally or analogously, demands a shift in our understandings of Earth, from viewing it as simply the physical "environment" humans live in, to having an ecological perspective that acknowledges that Earth is an abiotic context shared in common by members of the biotic community. During this extraordinary period of cultural and social transition, the world has begun to pay attention to the value of life in terms of "coexistence," "symbiosis," "communal life," and "interrelatedness," and there has been a surge of interest in spirituality and in spiritual lifestyles that foster a connection with the essence of life.[1] This interest in spirituality and human nature as the foundation of human life has led to an increased interest in the religions of the East.

Interestingly, the achievements of modern, particularly quantum physics, have much in common with Eastern philosophical thought. As a relationship of mutual inspiration and wisdom has developed between Western science, which investigates the

[1] Sallie McFague, *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2008), 34. McFague's metaphor of the Earth as the body of God continues the dramatic challenge of Christian ecological understanding to the classical incarnational models and metaphors that the church has used to describe the nature of God.

objective world, and Eastern wisdom, which pursues subjective enlightenment, intellectuals worldwide have begun to reconsider intuition, insight, and enlightenment, which were previously disregarded as mystical by the dominant rationalist ideology. This change is transforming our understandings of humanity and the world, and humanity in the world. It is now imperative that we adopt a new framework for our lives, and seek out the required new worldview to generate a new way of life.

Since ancient times, Korean philosophies have thought of *Chon* (天, 천, meaning "heaven"), *Ji* (地, 지, meaning "land"), and *In* (人, 인, meaning "human") as the fundamental elements of the universe. The traditional Korean idea of *Chon-Ji-In* (天地人, 천지인) expresses an integral, circular interrelationship among God, the human being, and nature. This holistically inclusive harmony in Korean thought has its origins in the story of the Dan-gun myth,[2] Korea's national founding story. According to the myth, both God and nature are concerned with how to participate in the human world. *Hwan-in*, a God in the myth contemplates *Hong-ik-in-gan* (弘益人間, 홍익인간), which means extensive blessing on the human world. He allowed *Hwan-woong*, one of his sons who always wanted to go down to the human world, to serve humanity.

Three assistants who were in charge of the wind, the rain, and the clouds helped him to supervise 360 areas of human life such as food, longevity, illness, punishment, and good and evil. At that time, a bear and a tiger who wanted to become human implored

[2] The following Korean history appears in the 13th century *Samguk Yusa*, which focuses on various folktales, legends, and biographies from early Korean history. Many of the founding legends of the various kingdoms in Korean history are recorded in the book. The author, Il-yeon covered legends from many Korean kingdoms.

him to help. Hwan-woong told them to stay away from sunlight for 100 days and gave them only garlic and wormwood to eat. Only the bear survived and became a woman. She was married to Hwan-woong and they gave birth to a son, Dan-gun. When he grew up, he built a nation and it was considered to be the beginning of the Korean nation.

Since Dan-gun mythology contains the sense of worldliness, holistic inclusiveness, and symbiotic harmony, the thought of Korean *Chon* (天, 천) has been not only substantiated with heaven but also with God living together with humanity. The origin of the concept of *Chon* in *Donghak* can be found in the story of the Dan-gun myth, and *Donghak* represents it in its modern expression. *Donghak* (동학, meaning "Eastern learning"), the name of the new teaching founded by Choi Je-woo (his pen name is Su-woon) in 1860, appeared when the Cho-sun (1392–1910) feudalistic society was in a deeply troubled socio-political climate. This domestic feudal dynasty and also foreign, especially Japanese, colonial aggressors triggered new and revolutionary thoughts that contributed to the construction of a new paradigm. The 1894 Peasant Revolution, which was ignited by the *Donghak* movement, is considered as the beginning of the most significant historical epoch and marks the onset of modern Korean history.

The national belief systems of that time were not able to supply the people with a revolutionary energy because of their internal contradictions. The ideology of the Cho-sun Dynasty, Confucianism, was lacking with regard to the common people. Buddhism itself was rejected from the beginning by the dynasty. Daoism was widely connected to people's beliefs but never succeeded in becoming the dominant thought. Seohak (서학, literally "Western learning or Western Christianity") was a novel approach, but its

colonial aggressiveness and individualism, based on dichotomous thought, did not attract people. *Donghak* was born in the midst of these practical conditions.[3] In the distinctive liberated administration zones, called *Jip-gang-so*, of their peasant revolution, the *Donghak* leadership set up a system of self-government and practiced revolutionary policies. These included slave emancipation, women's liberation, and land reform. Their new and alternative paradigm was the world of *Hu-chon-gae-byeok* (後天開闢, 후천개벽, meaning "opening a new world").

Kiyul Chung claims that the fundamental philosophical and religious thoughts of Su-woon and the common usage in Korea were "deeply rooted in and concerned for the suffering of *Minjung* (민중, meaning 'common people') and their struggle for liberation."[4] Chung summarizes Su-woon as,

> …the founder of a *Minjung*-centered, liberation-oriented, and socially-transformative religious movement called the *Donghak* revolution … [He is] an organic neo-Confucian intellectual[5] who wrestled with the social and existential

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[3] Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 115.

[4] Kiyul Chung, "Donghak Concept of Heaven/God: Religion and Social Transformation" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 2005), 22.

[5] Chung is adapting a term that originated with Italian communist and member of Parliament Antonio Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks*; it is used by progressive thinkers in the West. "Organic intellectual" is a person whose ideas transcend the dominant ideas of their social class, country, etc.; the "organic intellectual" can be a farmer, a laborer, any common person, and need not have a high level of formal education. John Hart proposes "organic intellectual" in *Cosmic Commons*, and there is a fascinating link between Chung and progressive European social thought. According to Hart, the "organic intellectual" rises "above the consciousness and conduct of others in their social group and the broader society in order to theorize about, commit

> misery of his time, called for radical social change, and connected to the critical social issues of his time with reflection upon existential issues, and sought personal and social transformation toward a world of love, equality, and justice. He struggled to creatively apply *Minjung*'s religious ethos (Buddhism, Daoism, and Shamanism) to a socially progressive grassroots revolution.[6]

Su-woon practiced what he believed and taught it in his daily life. He liberated his slaves, adopted one of them as his daughter and made another of them his daughter-in-law. This action was more than radical to the aristocratic class of the Cho-sun society. According to Chung,[7] people were fascinated with *Donghak*'s progressive and liberating teachings of anti-feudalism, anti-foreign aggressors, slave emancipation, women's liberation, egalitarianism, and respect for human dignity.

Donghak is composed of the most representative characters of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity in terms of life based on the traditional thought of the indigenous common people of Korea. Other Eastern systems of thought tend to consider impersonal concepts: for instance, *Chon* (천, heaven) in Confucianism, *Gong* (공, emptiness) in Buddhism, and *Mu* (무, nothingness) in Daoism. In contrast, the

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themselves to, and work for the vision they have." They advocate for the "wellbeing of their own group in its own right and for society as a whole, with the hope of bringing about a better society for one and all." Organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job that is characteristic of their class, than by their function in "directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong." The emergence of such visionaries is enabled because "every social group…creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields." Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (NY: International Publishers, 1971), 3-5.

[6] Ibid., xix-xx.

[7] Ibid., 27.

Korean common people had *Han* (한) thought.[8] This traditional Korean way of thinking involves reconciliation, harmony, and symbiotic holism. The *Han* way of thinking is represented in all aspects of Korean life: history, culture, and ideas. This made it possible even to accept aspects of Christianity, such as the Western concept of a personal God, which Koreans never had before. The Korean common people's *Han* thought, their Confucianism (respecting Heaven), their Buddhism (being present), their Daoism (caring for other beings), and their acceptance of elements of Christianity have become one and have been fused into *Donghak* thought.

Through the employment of the concepts of *Shi-Chonju* (侍天主, 시천주, all human beings and other living beings in our universe bear God within) and *Honwonilgi* (混元一氣, 혼원일기, a single sacred energy that works in various ways on a variety of levels), Su-woon maintained the existence of a sacred spirit that connects each individual with *Hanulnim*(한울님), with nature, with other human beings, and even with the entire

[8] Han thought is a philosophy unique to the native to Korean culture. From the point of view of etymological analysis, the word "Han"(한) means "Large", "High" or "Whole." Ancient Korean people planted their philosophical roots deep in what has come to be known as Han thought. It has contributed to the building of a Korean traditional philosophy, ethic, paradigm, theory and eventually practice. Korean ancient people attempted to learn what was most essential and meaningful in life. Han thought embraces the thought of complete harmony with in wholeness. Han encompasses everything in the universe. According to Han thought, all things are related with each other in harmony, not in conflict. The harmonious balance of all things excludes both disruption and confrontation, marking all things into a large oneness. The principles of Han thought also emphasize the love of peace. Extreme individualism and egoism are not allowed in Han thought. The Han thought provides a humanistic and ethical foundation for Korean socioecological ethics. Han thought is a valuable philosophy for Korean religions to explore toward the development of the discipline in Korea. Sang-yil Kim, *Segae chulhak-goa Han* (Global Philosophy and Han) (Seoul: Jeonmangsa, 1989), 3-6.

universe. In other words, Su-woon believed that *Hanulnim* interacts with every single entity in the universe through this sacred energy.[9]

Founded on this philosophy, Su-woon offered a new paradigm of civilization with which to overcome the anthropocentric worldview of the modern Western world. He spoke of the beginning of a new world (개벽, *gaebyeok*) to usher in a new civilization and construct a different framework for human life. In a contemporary Korean Christian ecological spirituality that overcomes the limitations of modern Western civilization, it is necessary to illuminate the implications of *Donghak* as an alternative worldview and to examine its potential to assist in formulating proposals to renew nature.

The Nineteenth Century Korean Social Context

Korea in the nineteenth century experienced crises as a result of both internal corruption of the ruling group and external threats from foreign nations. At this time the Cho-sun dynasty was tightening its grip on people in order to maintain the nation's feudalism. The way the rulers did so made the *minjung* (민중)[10] feel helpless in the

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[9] Cumings, 79.

[10] Minjung is a Korean word, but it is a combination of two Chinese characters min(民) and jung (衆). Min can be translated as "people" and jung as "the mass." Thus, minjung means "the mass of the people," or mass, or just the people. For Byung-Mu Ahn, the best known minjung theologian, the concept of minjung is undefinable. It is a holistic, dynamic, and changing reality, one which escapes categorization. Once it is subjected to definition, it becomes the victim of ideology and the object of speculation. It is, therefore, unwise to define it. What he says is true of the spirit of minjung. However, for the ease of communicating a general understanding of minjung, the term commonly refers to those who are politically-oppressed, economically-exploited and socio-culturally alienated in our day-to-day life. See CCA-CTC, *Minjung Theology:*

present and hopeless about their future. They were unable to cope with ever increasing economic, social, and political oppression. Corruption was so widespread, from the central governing body oriented toward the monarchy down to the smallest local authorities, that the people had nowhere to turn but to themselves.

At the center of this situation the dynasty saw the rise and fall from power of different factions, one after another, for over three centuries. The most well-known family in power in the nineteenth century was the "An Dong" Kims. An Dong was the name of the place from which these Kims traced their ancestry. The Kims, like most other powerful figures in the history of the dynasty, were related to the kings by marriage and maintained their power for over 60 years. During this period (1802-1863) there were 1,238 cases of illegal activities by local aristocrats reported by the "Am Haeng Eosa," i.e., the royal secret inspectors traveling incognito.[11]

Instead of trying to tackle the root cause of the corruption, the aristocrats consistently turned their backs against the demands of the people, producing countless street-beggars who became thieves and robbers to feed themselves and their families. These bandits gradually organized themselves to attack the houses of the rich and powerful as well as corrupt local aristocrats. They were no longer simple robbers out of basic economic necessity; they were now political rebels beginning to send clear messages to the central government. These revolts, however, were met with stronger

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People as the Subject of History (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia - The Commission on Theological Concerns, 1981).

[11] Society for the Study of Korean Minjung, *Hankuk Minjungsa II* (History of Korean Minjung II) (Seoul: Pul Bit, 1986), 39.

suppression by the central authorities. The leaders of the revolts were without exception executed and the participants faced severe punishments.[12]

Among the uprisings, there were large-scale rebellions, such as the Pyung-An Province Farmers Revolt (1811) and the Im-Sul Farmers Revolt (1862) which drew tens of thousands of participants. The demands these uprisings put forward showed that the people were beginning to question the feudalistic social structure itself. Although none of these revolts achieved their objectives, they nevertheless paved the way for the most well-known uprising in the nineteenth century, namely, the Donghak Farmers Revolt (1894), which forced the nation to put an end to feudalism.[13]

Confucianism and Su-Woon's Enlightenment

Any discussion on the Confucian influence on the Korean society should not fail to mention *Samgang Oryun* (삼강오륜), the Three Bonds and the Five Moral Rules in human relations. *Samgang* (삼강) depicts the three fundamental principles between king and his servants, father and his children, and husband and wife. The former in each of the three groups has the heavenly authority over the latter. Thus, the relationship between the two in each group is marked by obedience and subjection. *Oryun* (오륜) is the following five cardinal articles of morality: (a) the affection between father and son, (b) the faithfulness between master and servant, (c) the separation (or distinction) between

[12] Cumings, 117.

[13] Ibid., 118.

husband and wife, (d) the right order between the old and the young, and (e) the confidence among friends. All of these, except the last, again, presuppose inequality.

The place of these social teachings in the Confucian Cho-sun dynasty was that of the divine commandments of any religious culture. These doctrines were taught in a more rigid manner in Korea than in China so that the former became more Confucian in outlook than the latter as a result. One example of the rigidity is shown in the regulations prohibiting widows to remarry. Whereas in China widows were allowed to remarry but this was not recommended, the same teaching was more strictly legislated in Korea. Su-woon was one of the victims of such socio-religious rigidity.

Su-woon was a fallen aristocrat. His ill-fate was decided at his birth: he was born to an aristocrat and a widow. As mentioned above, according to the custom of that time, a widow was not allowed to remarry. Hence, the marriage between his parents had no legitimacy. Being an "illegitimate child," Su-woon could not enjoy the same social status and prestige that his father had as an aristocrat. In such a highly moralistic Confucian society he was, instead, destined to be an outcast. No matter how much he studied, the opportunity to climb the social ladder was not available to him. He was expected to study like other aristocrats but could not hope for a bright future. Perhaps this predicament gave him his sensitivity toward his fellow *minjung* and also enabled him to work out his revolutionary ideas. He began to make an emotional connection between himself and the

society he had belonged to since he was young. "Even at an early age," says Yong Choon Kim, "Su-woon deeply lamented the trouble and turmoil in society."[14]

Su-woon had a sense of calling to change the contemporary social situation from its root cause. He realized that spiritual consciousness constituted the most fundamental structure of human beings, individually as well as collectively. The current turmoil of his nation, then, reflected both an inner spiritual depletion and the social corruption at large. He felt that the influx of enormous Western imperial power in the East was due not only to the military superiority of the West but to their mental-spiritual might. This conviction made him delve into such traditions as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. He knew that Confucianism, which had been used as a state ideology by the Cho-sun Dynasty to control the masses for over five hundred years, was unable to correct the ills of the society.[15] Indeed, this ancient Chinese moral philosophy, especially in the way it was taught in Korea, had been a strong supporter of the political and social *status quo*. And the other two traditions in Korea, Daoism and Buddhism, had been established in the nation for many generations, but were unable to provide a concrete way of liberation for the people in despair. Su-woon felt that a new "way" (i.e., *do*, commonly *dao* in English), with more relevance to the present situation, must be sought to save the nation. Where, or what, was this "way"? How about Christianity? Could it be, for him, the new "way"?

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[14] Yong Choon Kim, *The Chondogyo Concept of Man: An Essence of Korean Thought* (Seoul: Pan Korea Book Corporation, 1978), 5.

[15] *Hankuk Minjungsa II*, 35.

The Catholic mission in Korea had begun in the late eighteenth century. By the time of Su-woon's search, therefore, there were many followers of the Christian religion. Since the early nineteenth century, however, the influence of Christianity was joined by Western colonial expansionist activities and other international political developments that "began to add strong external pressures to those internal troubles in Korean society."[16] Naturally, the missionary activities were suspected of concealing imperialistic motives. The Opium War (1840-42) and the humiliation of China by the Western powers intensified this feeling. Hence, "Su-woon looked upon Christianity as a selfish and dangerous foreign doctrine."[17] For him, it was unthinkable that the Western religion would advance as a force distinct from Western political imperialism. In fact, some of the historical events taking place at the time showed their close connections. Moreover, the missionaries were highly antagonistic toward many of the cultural traditions in Korea. Therefore, the Christian mission itself, for Su-woon, was a serious threat to the integrity of his nation and the spiritual well-being of the people. The very naming of his new found "way" as *Donghak* (Eastern Learning) demonstrates his sense of threat from the influx of Western influence, which was commonly called "Seohak (Western Learning)."

It is noteworthy that saving people from their socio-political predicament as well as from spiritual poverty was the major motivation of Su-woon, as shown in much of the *Donghak* literature, such as the following: "Our teacher, Choi of Yongdam, receiving a direct order from God, tried to spread widely the virtue of *Donghak* as the Way in which

[16] Kim, *The Chondogyo Concept*, 6.

[17] Ibid., 7.

Heaven and human are one in order to save the people from suffering…"[18] How should a religious philosophy be thought out so as to have some socially emancipatory implications for the suffering people? This leads us to some of the important philosophical notions of Su-woon.

Three Main Concepts of Su-woon's Philosophy

Hanulnim

Su-woon's philosophy of human subjectivity is different from the Western humanism of the nineteenth century. According to Jang-Hwa Hong, his thought is profoundly pneumatological.[19] A sense or experience of the immanence of the Spirit is indispensable for understanding Su-woon's teachings. But there is no absoluteness with regard to the doctrine of the priority of spirit over matter. Neither is reality simply a materialistic evolutionary process of nature. Su-woon's philosophy may be viewed as a combination of a seemingly incompatible Platonic Idealism and scientific materialism. Although the existence of God is presupposed, this God is not the creator of all things *ex nihilo*. The relationship between God and nature is not one of "I and Thou"; the divine and the human are not as clearly separable as I and Thou. There is a radical oneness between God and nature. The *noumena* and *phenomena*, using Kantian terms, coincide

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[18] Don Hwa Lee, *Chondogyo Changgun-sa* (History of Chondogyo Foundation) (Seoul: Kyoungin Munhwa-sa, 1969), 46-7.

[19] Jang-Hwa Hong, *Chondogyo Gyori wa Sasang* (Chondogyo Doctrine and Thought) (Seoul: Chondogyo Jung-ang Chongbu, 1990), 52.

without the precedence of one over the other.[20] The evolution of the physical world is the process of *noumena* themselves. Is Su-woon's theism, then, pantheism? Not quite. For the relationship between an individual and the universe here is not identical with that of a part and the whole. His philosophy, again, is deeply pneumatological. Pan*en*theism, then, rather than pantheism, would be a better description of the theism of Su-woon.

Hong, however, is cautious about any attempt to describe Su-woon's theism in such terms, noting that Su-woon, the founder, never attempted to explain *Hanulnim* (한울님), the term which had been used to designate the Supreme Reality by the Koreans throughout their history.[21] The term *Hanulnim*, one of the oldest words in the Korean language, designates the One Supreme Being, outweighing any other ontological notions of its sort. *Hanulnim*, which later became *Hananim,* has been for Koreans "that than which nothing greater can be conceived," to use the expression of St. Anselm.[22] This Being is the One who sends rain and thunder as well as punishment and reward to people in accordance with their behaviors. "Han," the first part of *Hanulnim*, meant both "one" and "great." Dong Hee Choe argues that *Hanulnim* has been a proper name for Koreans as Yahweh has been for Jewish people, or Allah for Muslims, rather than one of the generic names, such as *Chon* ("Heaven" in Chinese), *Sangje* ("God" in Confucianism), and *Deus*.[23] That Su-woon used this term, *Hanulnim*, identifying it with *Chonju*, which

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 57.

[22] Ibid., 60.

[23] Ibid., 64.

the Catholics used for "God," without defining it, suggests that his notion of God was not completely devoid of anthropomorphic characteristics. There are some, such as David Chung, who suggest that this aspect of Su-woon shows his indebtedness to Christianity.[24] At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, Protestant missionaries made use of this indigenous term "*Hananim* (하나님)" to their advantage, borrowing it as the translation of "God." *Hanulnim*, for Su-woon, however, cannot be equated with in Western religious culture. Hong asserts that therefore, Su-woon's theism cannot be explained in terms of Western philosophical categories, namely, monotheism, pantheism, or even panentheism.

Su-woon operates on the basis of the two ontological currents of his time in Korea: one from outside, the other indigenous. The former comes from the Chinese philosophies of Neo-Confucianism and philosophical Daoism, and somewhat from Buddhism, which are generally regarded as being pantheistic. The latter is the indigenous monotheistic tradition of *Hanulnim* which has shaped the Korean mind for many centuries. The sources of Su-woon's theism, then, are philosophical pantheism and cultural monotheism.[25] If so, in the mind of the Korean is there a trace of monotheism? This religious strain in Korea is as old as the story of *Dan-gun*, the founding myth of the nation. The influence of indigenous tradition on Su-woon is seen in the anthropomorphic side of his theism.

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[24] David Chung, *Christianity and the World of East Asians: Confrontation and Accommodation* (Seoul: Korean Theological Study Institute, 1986), 140-1.

[25] Ibid., 143.

Chiki

Chiki (지기), which can be translated as "ultimate energy," is a "monistic power immanent in the universe."[26] It is that through which all things came into existence. This is the point at which it becomes clear that the nature of human relationship with God is not that of "I and Thou," for *Chiki* is the totality of existence. It is both Alpha and Omega. "Through [*Chiki*'s] own self-power and self-will, it evolved until it has reached the highest stage of evolution" in humanity.[27] Humanity is where we find the divine nature most fully. For a human being, not just symbolically but essentially, is the fullest exhibition of the evolutionary process of *Chiki*. In a sense, there is a similarity between *Donghak* and scientific evolutionism in that "all living beings evolved from lower forms to higher forms of life resulting in millions of different life forms in the universe."[28] Unlike Darwinism, however, *Donghak* holds that behind the evolution of nature lies the movement of the Spirit (this is comparable with the sacramental commons idea). The world, according to its *Chiki* doctrine, is the self-evolutionary manifestation of *Chiki*. Enlightenment, for Su-woon, then, is seeing the unity of oneself with one's own depth. In

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[26] Kim, *Chondogyo Concept of Man*, 19. The second character of *Chiki*, i.e., *ki*, is "*Chi*" in Chinese, which means "breath," or "energy," an important Daoist concept. Kim sees here "probable influence of Daoism" in Su-woon's thought.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Don Hwa Lee, *Sinin Chlorhak, pu Tonghak chi Insaeng Kwan* (Philosophy of New Human: With Appendix, Donghak Concept of Human) (Seoul: Ilsinsa, 1963), 15.

his mystical experience, Su-woon hears the voice of this Ultimate saying, *O shim jeuk yo shim* (오심즉여심), "My (Hanulnim's) mind is your (Su-woon's) mind."[29]

Shi Chonju

At this point Su-woon relates *Chiki* to another important doctrine of his, namely, *Shi Chonju* (시천주), i.e., "serving God," or "bearing God." Chi-ha Kim interprets that *Shi*, "serving," or "bearing," signifies the organic nature of the spirit, containing three unions: "the ecological union between humans and the cosmos, the social union among humans, and the revolutionary union between individuals and society."[30] For him, *Shi* points to a holistic vision of Reality. There is in *Shi Chonju* a radical union between God and nature. However, the relationship between an individual and the universe here is not identical with the whole. For its philosophy, again, is that of a part integrated within the deeply pneumatological. This can be argued from what was thought to be the revelatory experience of Su-woon:

> Furthermore, at the moment of the mystical experience with lamenting of late birth, Su-woon was shaken by a sudden, cold feeling, and with the feeling of the touching of the Spirit and the hearing of an inner voice, yet without being able to see and hear objectively. Su-woon asked God about the reason for his feeling. Then

[29] "Nonhakmun (Discourses)," has been used by Koreans in *Dongkyong Daejon*, translated with commentary in Korean by Nam Man sung (Seoul: Eulyu Munhwasa, 1973), 62.

[30] Kim, *Donghak Eyagi*, 16.

> God said, "My mind is your mind. Human does not know spirit, and spirit is also I.[31]

This became for Su-woon the moment of enlightenment which he repeatedly recalls later.

What is the nature or source of this experience of Su-woon's enlightenment? Obviously, there is someone, identified as God, with whom Su-woon converses. In that sudden experience, which happened after his long meditation for forty-nine days, there is both an external source and an internal realization.

First, there is the "touch" of the Spirit from without (*woe yu jop lyong ji ki*, 外有接靈之氣, 외유접령지기). Second, there is the realization from within (*nae yu gang hwa ji kyo*, 內有降話之敎, 내유강화지교). The source of the "touch" of the Spirit is identified as *ki* (*chi* in Chinese). That there is an external source of the touch that suggests that enlightenment, for Su-woon, is not simply a psychological state of affairs. Moreover, when the existence of spirit and matter is understood in a monistic sense, as it was for Su-woon, the spirit within resides not only in a human body but as one's body as well. Rather than saying, anthropomorphically, that God has personal characteristics, in the doctrine of *Shi Chonju* divine attributes inform human beings. Humanity is a theophany of the presence of the Spirit in the universe. The universe as a whole is the appearance of the Ultimate Energy (or the Spirit, *Chiki*) itself, and the Ultimate Energy is the power of the universe. There is no matter and spirit dualism here. In the face of the

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[31]"擧此一一不已故로 吾亦悚然하여 只有恨生晩之際에 身多戰寒하여
外有接靈之氣하고 內有降話之敎하되 視之不見이오 聽之不聞이라. 心尙怪訝하여
修心正氣而問曰 何爲若然也니까 曰吾心卽汝心也라 人何知之리오
知天地而無知鬼神하니 鬼神者는 吾也니라." Suk-san Yun, annot., *Juhae Donghak Kyongjeon* (Annotations of Donghak Scripture) (Seoul: Donghak-sa, 2009), 72-79.

present ecological crisis, this is a place where some contemporary critics of *Donghak*, such as Chi-ha Kim discussed above, find its doctrines resourceful.[32]

As mentioned above, for Hong *Donghak*'s theism cannot be explained in terms of Western philosophical categories. Hong also argues that *Donghak*'s theism unifies the opposites and contradictions between monotheism and pantheism in a dialectical way. There is, he contends, a harmony of the transcendent and the immanent, the absolute and the relative, the changing and the constant, the eternal and the temporal, matter and spirit, and the universal and the particular.[33] It seems that what Hong alludes to is a combination of dialectical theism and process theism. Su-woon operates on the basis of the two ontological currents of his time in Korea: one from the intellectual circle, the other from popular religiosity. The one from the intellectual circle is composed of the ancient Chinese philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism, especially centered on the ideas of *Tai Chi* and *Wu Chi*, which are generally regarded as being pantheistic.[34] The latter is the indigenous monotheistic tradition of *Hanulnim*, which is related to the philosophy of *Han* and which has shaped the Korean mind for many centuries.

Spiritual Reinterpretation as the Way of Revitalization of the Old

Su-woon did not create new terms. Instead, he used familiar terms in new ways. This means that Su-woon sought a new out of the old; for him, there is nothing new under

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[32] Kim, *Donghak Eyagi*, 21.

[33] See Hong, *Chondogyo Gyori wa Sasang*, 11-18.

[34] Ibid., 72.

heaven. A reform is to be made from within. Even in founding a new religion, which Su-woon clearly did, the new concepts he discussed neither revitalized nor reinterpreted of the "old tradition," as he called Confucianism. For Su-woon the traditional religions in Korea, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism, were "dead" since they had lost the spiritual power to defend Korean people from the "assault of the Western nations." In particular, Su-woon had in mind the dominance of the "Western Learning, i.e., Christianity (Catholicism),"[35] in Korea. Behind the rapid success of this foreign teaching, Su-woon saw the desperate condition of the Korean people.

Su-woon felt that Christianity, at least in the way it came to East, was not contextually suited to the latter. Su-woon's *Donghak*, therefore, was not conceived so much to negate the Western Learning as to complement it and to add what he considered was lacking in it. This is evident in Su-woon's contention that Western Learning, which for him was the force of *Yin*, must be "suppressed" by the power of the *Yang* of his Eastern Learning. In the light of the traditional doctrine of *Yin-Yang*, however, the two forces of *Yin* and *Yang* must be kept in balance. Thus, by saying that *Yin* is to be suppressed by *Yang*, Su-woon wanted to complement or give balance to the dominance of *Yin*. The overwhelming malaise of the present socio-political situation in Korea was interpreted by Su-woon as the domination of *Yin* over *Yang*.[36] It was believed that

[35] The Protestant mission was not actively present in Korea until the late nineteenth century.

[36] Hong, 48.

whenever the balance of the two modes of *Yin* and *Yang* is destroyed, confusion and chaos ensue in a person and society.

As a remedy of this imbalance Su-woon shifts emphasis from the outward expression of *in-ui-ye-ji* (仁義禮智, 인의예지)[37] to the inward solidity of *su-shim-jong-ki* (守心正氣, 수심정기),[38] literally, "cultivating mind and possessing right *ki (chi*)," which, for him, was more fundamental than the Four Beginnings of Mencius. Haewol, Su-woon's successor and the second leader of *Donghak*, explains that "*su shim jong ki* is that which provides the life-spirit of Heaven and Earth whenever in need, hence without *su shim jong ki*, it is difficult to practice *in ui ye ji*."[39] That is, spirituality constituted the more holistic center of one's being than ethics.

Spiritual reinterpretation of the ethical issues is Su-woon's way of revitalization of the ancient teachings. That humans are the most elevated beings is not simply due to their intellectual capability. Rather the ability for the highest consciousness of humans is the result of the holistic make-up of the human spirit.

There are two questions that need to be asked in regard to the peculiarity of Su-woon: what did Su-woon want? And how did he pursue it? In response to these, I select two: the liberation consciousness and the spiritual synthesis. The former is the substance,

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[37] The four basic virtues emphasized by Mencius mean "compassion-righteousness-propriety-wisdom," respectively.

[38] Su-woon, "*Sudukmun* (Disciplining on Virtue)," 117: 仁義禮智 先聖之所敎 修心正氣 惟我之更定 "'*In ui ye ji*' is what ancient saint had taught, but '*su shim jong ki*' is what I introduce it again." (my translation).

[39] Quoted from *Hangul Dongkyong Daejon* (Korean Dongkyong Daejon), ed. and trans. by Donghak Yonguwon (Institute of Donghak Studies, 1991), 145.

and the latter the form of his thought. He wanted the liberation of all, and spiritual synthesis was his way of connecting traditional thought and the present oppressive situation.

The first aspect of Su-woon's peculiarity is shown in that the starting point for him is the present human situation, not the classics of the past. This was indeed a revolt against the intellectual current of his time; the first and foremost requirement of a Confucian scholar was to be well-versed in the classics. For him, however, digging through piles of ancient literature was not as important as possessing the heart to moan at the plight of one's fellow people. I call this a "liberation consciousness."

The second aspect of Su-woon's peculiarity is the spiritual thread which runs through his system. To the ethical teaching of *in ui ye ji*, again, for example, he gave a spiritual flavor in his doctrine of *su shim jonq ki*. For the people who had been shaped by traditional religion or animistic culture, this device was effective in enlivening the "dead" religions for their empowerment.

It is my contention that Su-woon was a liberation theologian of his time. What made him so effective was his never-ending engagement in the life of liberation, which shaped his thought. With genuine passion for transcendence of the present socio-spiritual situation of the nation, he was in constant dialogue with his religious and social contexts.

Su-woon was deeply in touch with this religiosity of his compatriots. The pluralistic nature of Korean culture was well depicted by early missionaries. Since, for Su-woon, the religious realm constitutes the most basic structure of human beings, he attempted to achieve liberation through religions; the theology of liberation and religions'

thought must coincide for the realization of the most thoroughgoing transformation. In my assessment, the most striking and singular aspect of Su-woon is the spiritual connection between the past (various religious ideas) and the present (oppressive social situation). The past and the present are united in his spiritual thought.

The Dialectics of East and West

Hang-Nyong Lee compares the dialectics of East and West.[40] Hegelian dialectic in the West, he points out, reaches its synthesis through thesis-anti-thesis. In the process there is always the stage of negation. However, Lee argues, synthesis is not reached through negation in the dialectics of the East. Instead, he says, it is thesis-thesis-return (to the origin).[41] The doctrines of *Bul-I*, "non-duality," of Buddhism and *Yin-Yang* of Confucianism as well as the philosophy of Han, "One, or Great," in Korea are examples of Eastern dialogics.

For any thesis A there is normally an alternative thesis B. The word "alternative" here, however, can be misleading, for the latter B does not necessarily negate the former A. Nevertheless, the presence of such different theses creates a certain struggle, which in turn produces a synthesis. Unlike the Hegelian dialectics, in which such struggle creates a competitive mood, calling for a synthesis of A and B, the synthesis here (Eastern dialogics) is the outcome of the process which negated neither A nor B; the spirit of this

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[40] Hang-Nyong Lee, "Dan-gun Sasangkwa Donghak Sasang (The Philosophies of Dan-gun and Donghak)," in *Shin In Gan* (New Humanity), 394: 16-23 (1982, 1.1), 16.

[41] Ibid.

synthesis is "both/and" rather than "either/or."[42] The Neo-Confucian doctrine of *Yin/Yang* is a prime example of this. Each of the two modes, *Yin* and *Yang*, opposes as well as requires the existence of the other.

Moreover, in the dialogics of the East, the synthesis is not so much the result of the struggle between A and B as it is that of an appeal to the past. In other words, it is more a reinterpretation of the past than a progressive synthesis for a new creation. According to this dialogical framework, progress normally means continuous dialogue with the past. The culture in which such dialectics prevail would be somewhat backward looking as East Asian cultures generally have been. Lee contends that this is the type of dialogics at work in Su-woon's thought. For Su-woon the relationship between God, the Ultimate, and I is one of non-duality.[43] This, however, does not mean that God and I are identified without any distinction. Rather, the relationship between God and me, for Su-woon, is to be understood as undifferentiated duality or non-dualistic duality. As illustrated above, this can be seen through Su-woon's key doctrines of *Chiki* and *Shi Chonju*.

There is in Su-woon's thought, however, a more progressive forward looking tendency than Lee's thesis entails. Su-woon, for example, repeatedly mentions the beginning of the "New Heaven and New Earth (*Hu chon gae byeok*, 後天開闢,

[42] Ibid., 18.

[43] Ibid.

후천개벽).[44] As mentioned above, Su-woon's thought contains certain elements of evolutionary process. Within the framework of the Eastern dialectics which Lee demonstrates, what is the difference of Su-woon from his intellectual predecessors?[45] The most distinctive characteristic of this religious thinker, again, lies in his use of spirituality. In making use of Confucian teachings, for example, Su-woon spiritualized their predominantly ethical doctrines. According to Su-woon's own explanation of the term *Chiki*, for example, there is a spiritual union between God and humanity.[46] *Ki,* again, is a monistic notion denoting both material ether and spirit (or spiritual force). As explained above, this philosophical term is combined with *chi*, "supreme" or "Ultimate," to denote that reality which is more deified than *ki* alone. *Chiki* has personal attributes such as will and consciousness. It is at the same time non-personal in the sense of being the totality of existence. *Chiki*, then, is that which is beyond the personal/non-personal distinctions. Su-woon made the predominantly non-personal notion *ki* into the reality which can even be worshipped as a deity.[47]

Su-woon explains *Chiki* in connection with his other doctrine, *Shi Chonju*, as "the spirit within (*nae you shin lyong*, 內有神靈, 내유신령)" and "the *ki*-ization without

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[44] *Hu chon gae byeok*, literally, "opening of new era, or heaven," is Su-woon's version of millenarianism. According to this doctrine, by founding *Donghak*, Su-woon declared the beginning of the New Eon, which will last for fifty thousand years, ending the old eon of fifty thousand years.

[45] Hang-Nyong Lee, 20.

[46] Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 121.

[47] Ibid., 124.

(*Woe you ki hwa*, 外有氣化, 외유기화)." The "spirit (*lyong*, 靈, 영)" - which frequently appears in both Chinese religious Daoism and Korean traditional religion - is the same term used by Christians for the "Holy Spirit (Sung Lyong, 聖靈, 성령)." This may be due to the generally spiritualistic tendency of the Korean people. Generally, one can distinguish between *lyong* and *ki* in Su-woon's writings as follows: the former contains more personal attributes, and the latter more impersonal ones. This will be seen later as one of the major distinctions between *sacramental commons* (which embodies Spirit to a greater extent than *shin lyong*) and *Donghak* (which embodies *shin lyong* to a greater extent than Spirit).

Korean Ecological Ethics in *Donghak* and other Traditional Religions

Eco-ethical Ideas in *Donghak*

As mentioned above, Su-woon emphasizes *Hanulnim*, which can be described as an organic cosmology from the perspective of nature. *Hanulnim* is the creator of everything and a true being who dwells within everything in the universe. In the thought of *Shi Chonju*, the concept of *Chon* or *Hanulnim* is not that of a personal monotheistic God, but is the grand cosmic life itself. Hence, humans have to realize and practice *Hanulnim* in themselves in order to attain it. As the concept of *Shi Chonju* expanded, it became *Sa-In-Yeo-Chon* (事人如天, 사인여천), which literally means to treat other human beings as *Hanulnim*.[48] In other words, humans themselves have to be respected

[48] Lee, "Dan-gun Sasangkwa Donghak Sasang," 20.

without distinction between men and women, old and young, poor and rich. *Donghak*'s egalitarian, liberating, and empowering idea can only become realized when humanity embodies *Hanulnim*, by worshipping *Hanulnim* and acting as *Hanulnim*. This *Donghak* philosophy was radical in its egalitarian emphasis when the society was still class-oriented and male-dominated.

There is another well-known explanation for *Hanulnim*, that is, *Sam-Kyong* thought, which means the practice of three orders of respect. One of them is respecting *Hanulnim* within oneself. After that, the respect extends toward *Hanulnim* in neighbors. Finally, the highest perfection is attained, and that is to respect things. The idea of "one bowl of rice" exemplifies this practice. The bowl of rice is life itself; therefore, the bowl of rice is *Hanulnim*.

Su-woon explained the meaning of main incantation[49] in *Donghak* as follows:

> *Shi* means that we have cosmic spirit within ourselves, all other beings also act as a body of energy, and all individuals realize the fact that no one can survive without others and the universe. *Ju* means that we honor and serve *Hanulnim* like parents. *Chowha* means that it becomes autonomous. *Chung* means that we unite with virtue and make a decision. *Youngsae* means the whole life of human beings. *Bulmang* means that we preserve thought. *Mansa* means abundance. *Ji* means that we understand the way and receive its wisdom (my translation).[50]

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[49] It consists of two different kinds of incantations. One is "spirit calling incantation," and the other is "main incantation." The former is 至氣今至願爲大降 (지기금지원위대강, Now I understand the ultimate energy of *Hanulim.* May the spirit come to me), the latter is 侍天主造化定永世不忘萬事知 (시천주조화정영세불망만사지, I will bear and serve *Hanulim* like parents, accordingly, hope to become oneness with *Hanulnim*) (my translation).

[50] "侍(Shi)者 內有神靈 外有氣化 一世之人 各知不移者也 主(Ju)者 稱其尊而與父母同事者也 造化(Chowha)者 無爲而化也 定(Chung)者

Therefore, through the practice of *Donghak* philosophy, the way of *Shi* (侍, 시) is shown as *Nae-You-Shin-Lyong* (內有神靈, 내유신령), *Wae-You-Ki-Hwa* (外有氣化, 외유기화), *Il-Sea-Ji-In* (一世之人, 일세지인), and *Kag-Ji-Bul-I* (各知不移, 각지불이). *Nae-You-Shin-Lyong* means that we have cosmic spirit within ourselves, and *Wae-You-Ki-Hwa* means that all other beings also act as a body of energy. *Il-Sea-Ji-In*, *Kag-Ji-Bul-I* means that all individuals realize the fact that no one can survive without others and the universe.[51] Life exists in relation to other beings. The human is *Hanulnim* and the universe is the "I." Other things are all *Hanulnim* and universe.

Su-woon foresaw that *Hu-chon-gae-byeok* (후천개벽), the opening of a new heaven, would emerge when humans are awakened to their divinity and the interrelationship with all other beings. *Hu-chon-gae-byeok* is the opening of both social consciousness and a social system and it initiates the opening of cosmic consciousness and cosmic society, which is comparable with the creation consciousness in sacramental commons. However, *Hu-chon-gae-byeok* thought merely suggests that all this will come about naturally and did not focus on human practical effort.

合其德定其心也 永世(Youngsae)者 人之平生也 不忘(Bulmang)者 存想之意也 萬事(Mansa)者 數之多也 知(Ji)者 知其道而受其知也故 明明其德 念念不忘則 至化至氣 至於至聖." Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 95-97.

[51] Ibid.

Minza Chio claims that *Donghak*'s revolutionary idea is essentially spiritual and ecological and that it comes from "a profound connection between ecology and spirituality."[52] She explains how *Donghak* thought could be applied to the modern world:

> Ecological consciousness, at the deepest level, is the intuitive awareness of the oneness of all life, the interdependence of its multiple manifestations and its cycles of change and transformation. Ecological consciousness is spiritual in its deepest essence in that spirituality could be defined as the mode of consciousness in which we feel connected to the cosmos as a whole. Modern human-centered doctrine based on the spirit/matter dualism should be reborn as a new union by realizing the very oneness of all life through ecological revolution. The secret of ecological revolution lies in impartial reverence and love of all things that is the recognition of our original cosmic nature, that is, "*Hanul*,"[53] and its practice together.[54]

According to Chio, Korean ecological thought was subsequently deepened and taken further by the *Hansalim* study group that is based on *Donghak* thought. She claims that its ecological thought considers current ecological problems to have been generated from "the dominance of modern industrialism in capitalism."[55] Industrial culture governs people and nature by machinery and technology. Industrialism and modernity, as twin components of the dominant culture, "coerce all living-beings into a death-like state by alienating them from the nature wherein they should dwell. This coercion occurs partly

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[52] Minza Chio, "Su-woon's Hu-chon-gae-byeok and Ecotopia," *Donghak Hakbo* (Donghak Journal) 17 (2004): 172.

[53] "Hanul" literally means heaven.

[54] Chio, 172-173.

[55] Ibid., 174.

through the division of the self and neighbor which results in the loss of community. More than this, industrial culture is a system of life alienation which is anti-humanistic and anti-ecological."[56] In order to overcome the crisis of industrial civilization, from individual daily life to the social, economic, political, and ecological arena, Korean ecological thought suggests a great transformation of moral, spiritual, and ethical consciousness as well as of the material system. The overcoming of alienation between humans and between humans and nature is only possible when we realize ecological reason and humanistic life. The alternative new world view can be thought of as "socioecological consciousness," that is, a socioecological ethics, originating from *Donghak*.

Hansalim teaches and practices an ecological lifestyle and communal life based on its principles of cosmic awakening about all beings: ecological awakening about our nature; communal awakening about society; life-culture activity toward new consciousness, value, and manner of living; social-practice activity to fulfill and actualize a harmonious order of life; life-cultivation activity for self-realization; and the unification activity of living-beings toward creating a new world.[57] Consequently, we realize that even contemporary Korean ecological spirituality has been influenced by *Donghak* thought.

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[56] Hansalim, *Hansalim Seoneon* (Hansalim Manifesto) (Seoul: Hansalim Press, 1989), 14-16.

[57] Ibid., 75-86.

Korean Neo-Confucian Ecological Ethics

The basic views of nature in both Eastern and Western traditions are being challenged by Korean neo-Confucian ecological ethics. It offers many philosophical avenues for a better understanding and application of Korean socioecological ethics. In Korean neo-Confucianism, the prospect of inherent life and value in nature is emphasized. It focuses on practical experience, highlighting the body and sensuous world as vital components of being human. African American ecological ethics is (as elaborated by Diane D. Glave and Mark Stoll), however, distinct from Korean neo-Confucianism in many ways; it grew in the contemporary West, does not necessitate a spiritual cosmology, and is more focused on civil rights in religion itself. By contrast, American Indian[58] ecological ethics (as presented by Jace Weaver and George E. "Tink" Tinker, among others) has some similarities with Korean neo-Confucianism. They share a view of nature that is inclusive, harmonious and reciprocal, giving nature value in its own right.

Korean neo-Confucianism greatly emphasized the interrelation and unity between the human order and the order of nature. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr points out, the sixteenth-century Korean neo-Confucian Yi Hwang emphasized this truth. Nasr's commentaries upon the Western Inscription of the eleventh-century Chinese sage Chang-Tzu is a testament of his insistence upon this unity.[59] Human embodiment is therefore

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[58] Tinker's books' titles use "American Indian"; the books' contents refer to U.S. natives also as simply "Indians." Most native peoples of the U.S. prefer "Indian" to "Native American." For example, a title of Tinker's book is *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation*.

[59] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41.

necessarily ecological. Enlightenment itself becomes intimately related to a cooperative relationship with nature.

In this cosmology, humans are a distinct but completely embedded part of nature. The human is integral in, and part of the flow of the universe:

> Nature...has an inherent unity, namely, it has a primary ontological source (T'ai chi). It has patterned processes of transformation (*yin/yang*) and it is interrelated in the interaction of the five elements and the 10,000 things. It is dynamic through the movements of material forces (*chi*).[60]

Humans' role in this cosmology is not to become part of nature by becoming animalistic, but rather by following and accommodating the natural flow of the universe, which is the ontological source, while maintaining one's unique qualities. Further, balance is seen as the ideal relationship between human and nature. As is the case with American Indians, in Korean ecological thought nature is primary, since it is the ontological basis of all that exists. To attribute ontological and spiritual primacy to nature counters scientific reductionism, and places human nature completely within the realm of nature.[61]

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[60] David Landis Barnhill and Roger S. Gottlieb ed., *Deep Ecology and World Religions* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001), 130.

[61] Ibid., 139.

Mary Evelyn Tucker states that, in Confucianism, "nature is both the container and the context for human action."[62] Embeddedness in nature is a fact of human experience that can be seen as a liberating device rather than a limiting one. In the sense of humans' animality, nature can be seen as a limitation that has been largely overcome in the industrialized world through technological advancement. But humans as more-than-animals, capable of imagination and reason, could arguably benefit from the use of nature as a liberating tool, especially in its aesthetic capacity.[63] The concept of nature as a container for human action gives sovereignty and freedom to humans, while establishing an order, limitation and direction. According to this model, humans should find connections with the natural world, and act in accordance with nature in order to be free.

Korean neo-Confucian ecological ethics holds many significant, subtle similarities with American Indian ecological ethics. They both reject the "human-in-environment" idea in favor of "the relational, total-field image."[64] This includes realizing that one entity cannot be defined to the exclusion of another. This overlap is fundamental to understanding the ethical significance of American Indian ecological ethics and neo-Confucian ecological ethics. If humans are embodied and an integral part of nature, then a disharmonious split from this context will result in humans not realizing their own potential or understanding themselves.

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[62] Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong ed., *Confucianism and Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 135.

[63] Ibid., 134.

[64] Barnhill, 139.

In Korean neo-Confucian ecological ethics, the prospect of nature requiring humans to fulfill a heavenly potential is intriguing. The Confucian triad of Heaven-Earth-Human is more explicit about this. It does not include animals as a distinct group, only allowing for them under the realm of Earth. It is important to keep in mind that this triad and these qualities are not hierarchies in the sense of superiority-inferiority relationships, but rather roles and potentialities which should be fulfilled.

Some people argue that Confucianism is anthropocentric and thus incompatible with contemporary socioecological ethics. However, on my examination Korean neo-Confucianism has a profound regard for the primacy of nature which might be seen as remarkably compatible with modern ecological thinking. Described by Tucker, the philosophy of Ekken is able to comprehensively and completely embrace other people, the natural environment, and a sense of the whole.[65] Working on a unity of matter, spirit and energy allows this cosmology to take place. It also results in the understanding of nature as inherently quality-laden, not simply a materialistic entity to be treated instrumentally. Understanding nature as life, dynamism, energy, spirit, transformation and potential helps one to see it as a source of life and morality instead of simply as a material "resource." Korean neo-Confucian ecological ethics evokes a profound respect for nature's dynamic rhythms, and harmony and balance with humans.

[65] Tucker, 142-143.

Korean Daoist Ecological Ethics

Daoism attaches much importance to the life of each individual. It is not because of a stress on individuality itself but because of its emphasis on dependence of each member on the other. There is no inequality between you and me, right and wrong, precious and humble, and so on. Each individual is interdependent with all others for survival, sustenance, and fulfillment. As a human is only one part of the interdependent whole, humanity receives no special attention in Daoism. It stresses the unity of the universe and in particular the harmony between nature and human beings.

To understand the concept of nature in Daoism, three interrelated notions need to be explained: that is, *Dao*, translated as "the Way," "Supreme Principle," or "Truth" in English, *De*, "Virtue" or "Love" in English, and *Wu-wei*, "non-action" in English.[66] The teachings of Lao Tzu are the best known example through which the use of metaphysical and poetical language gives a rich representation of how nature and *Dao* work.

According to Lao Tzu, "human is based on Earth, Earth is based on Heaven, Heaven is based on the Way (*Dao*), and the Way is based on Nature." In other words, *Dao* stands for "the ultimate reality of nature."[67] *Dao* is nameless and unnamable, and cannot be defined due to its infinite nature. It is empty, simple, eternal, and life-sustaining. In accordance with Lao Tzu's description, only finite things can be named so as to

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[66] Covington Scott Littleton, *The Sacred East* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 1999), 25.

[67] Po-Keung Ip, "Daoism and the Foundations of Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 5 (1983): 338.

individuate them.[68] *Dao* does not have a definite identity because it is the utmost presence beyond the universe, nature, and individuals. Chuang Tzu's most famous description of *Dao* is found in the following story:

> Master Tung Kuo asked Lao Tzu, "This thing called the Way - where does it exist?"
> Lao Tzu said, "There's no place it doesn't exist."
> "Come," said Master Tung Kuo, "you must be more specific!"
> "It is in the ant."
> "As low a thing as that?"
> "It is in the panic grass."
> "But that's lower still!"
> "It is in the tiles and shards."
> "How can it be so low?"
> "It is in the piss and shit."[69]

Joseph Needham interprets *Dao* as "the way in which the universe worked; in other words the Order of Nature, which brought all things into existence and governs their every action, not so much by force as by a kind of natural curvature in space and time."[70] Therefore, what Daoist philosophers stress the most is the unity of nature, which is the eternity and uncreatedness of *Dao*.

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[68] Ibid.

[69] "東郭子問於莊子曰 所謂道,惡乎在 莊子曰 無所不在 東郭子曰 期而後可 莊子曰 在螻蟻 曰何其下邪 曰在稊稗 曰何其愈下邪 曰在瓦甓 曰何其愈甚邪 曰在屎溺." Chuang Tzu, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 16.

[70] John Baird Callicott and Roger T. Adams, eds., *Nature in Asian traditions of Thought* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 133.

According to Po-Keung Ip, impartiality is another feature of *Dao* that constructs "the moral imperative to be virtuous toward nature."[71] As Ip points out, Lao Tzu said that because "being all embracing is impartial," everything is "to be treated on an equal footing." Everything is seen as being "ontologically equal."[72] Lao Tzu also saw that beings are ontologically equal because they are formed as a result of a process of self- and mutual-transformations. Lao Tzu's famous story of the "butterfly dream" teaches us that everything is relative:

> One day Chuang Tzu dreamed that he became a butterfly. He did not know that he was Chuang Tzu while flying happily as a butterfly. When he woke up he became Chuang Tzu again. He was unsure whether he had dreamed that he was a butterfly or a butterfly was dreaming that he became Chuang Tzu. There must be a certain division between Chuang Tzu and a butterfly. That is *Mul-hwa* - the idea of flux and change.[73]

These dreams illustrate that Chuang Tzu and a butterfly could be interpenetrated: not only Chuang Tzu and a butterfly but also anything that we think is insignificant compared to the whole or the universe; that which looks small to a human could be gigantic to a

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[71] Po-Keung Ip, 339.

[72] Ibid.

[73] "昔者莊周爲胡蝶 然胡蝶也 自喻適志與 不知周也 俄然覺 則然周也 不知周之夢爲胡蝶與 胡蝶之夢爲周與 周與胡蝶 則必有分矣 此之謂物化." Chuang Tzu, 32.

microbe. In other words, Chuang Tzu and a butterfly are therefore not separate objects but neither are they two. Everything is relative.[74]

De (power/virtue), derived from *Dao*, is at the core of the world of nature and of human constitution. Each individual element has its own intrinsic excellence, that is, *De*. *Dao* represents the birth of all living beings and these are then nurtured by *De*. Another well-known story by Chuang Tzu illustrates how *De* is applied:

> A duck has short legs, but if one wants to stretch them it will feel pain. A crane has long legs, but if one wants to shorten them it will feel distress. Therefore, one should try not to shorten that which was originally long and not to stretch that which was originally short.[75]

Littleton explains that we are happiest when the *De* is "freely exercised, without external interference" and as the above anecdote indicates, "the imposition of institutional restraints as laws and codes of morality can only distort" our nature and *De*.[76]

Wu-wei is literally translated as "taking no action," "inaction," or "doing everything by doing nothing," which contains the meaning of laziness in Western terms. *Wu-wei* should not be seen as doing nothing but acting "in accordance with unprincipled knowing, acting in such a way as to take up, or at least to appreciate, the particular

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[74] Ip, 36.

[75] "是故 鳧脛雖短 續之則憂 鶴脛雖長 斷之則悲 故性長非所斷 性短非所續 無所去憂 意仁義其非人情乎 彼仁人何其多憂也." Chung Tzu, 66.

[76] Littleton, *The Sacred East*, 123.

perspective of a thing and such actions 'must not be mediated by rules or principles.'"[77] Thus, *Wu-wei* means "not indulging in useless effort and not doing anything that contradicts nature—two actions which will only lead to the opposite of the intended result."[78] It is *Dao* that never acts, but there is nothing that it does not do. *Wu-wei* is the basic way that humans, acquiring no special status from *Dao*, should act toward nature and conform to it. Ip summarizes well: ". . . insofar as ecological action is concerned," the Daoist's lesson is "so simple that it almost amounts to a truism: act in accordance with nature."[79] Thus, according to Daoism, *Wu-wei* must be our proper attitude toward nature because nature is a mystery beyond human understanding and we are no more than a small part of it.

To use David Hall's words, "those who are concerned with exceedingly long-run considerations (as philosophers well must be) may find the non-anthropocentrism of Daoist ethics appealing and suggestive of some novel strategies for handling their encounters with their ambience."[80]

Confucianism and Buddhism, rather than Daoism, have been the predominant and influential philosophies within Korean history. However, although never at the core of Korean history, Daoism has always existed as an underlying presence. Whereas

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[77] Callicott and Ames, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, 109.

[78] Ibid., 112.

[79] Ip, 341.

[80] Roger Ames and David Hall, *Daodejing: Making this Life Significant* (New York: Ballantine, 2003), 111.

Confucianism and Buddhism left behind countless historical records, Daoism did not. The only recorded information that remains is small and fragmented. As a result of this, until the end of World War II only one fully researched paper on Korean Daoism existed.[81] Because of this lack of written sources, Korean Daoism was incapable of spreading as a philosophy. However, that is not to say that Daoist philosophy did not have some influence.

Daoism within Korea, unlike Buddhism and Confucianism, or even Chinese Daoism, failed to grow as an autonomous religious denomination or cultural sect. It first arrived in Korea in 624 CE. Its popularity in China led the Tang Monarch, Kaotsu, to send a Daoist preacher to the Koguryo Kingdom along with Daoist literature: Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.[82] Korean historical documents show that the instructions of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu were welcomed and eagerly scrutinized by one of the Three Kingdoms, Koguryo Court, in the early 7th century. This eagerness can be seen in the fact that the Daoist preacher spoke on the philosophy of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu in lectures that were attended by the Koguryo monarch and his ministers. As a result of this enthusiasm from the Koguryo Royal court, Buddhist temples were eventually transformed to Daoist temples. However, this first enthusiasm for Daoism within the Koguryo Kingdom lasted

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[81] Nung-Hwa Yi (1868-1945) was the first historical-scholar on Korean Daoism. He wrote *Chosun Dogyo Sa* (The history of Chosun Daoism). This writing was the first fully accounted research on the history of Korean Daoism.

[82] William E. Henthorn, *A History of Korea* (New York: The Free Press, 1971), 56.

for only 30 years.[83] In the Paekche Kingdom (BCE 18 - CE 660), another one of the Three Kingdoms, Chinese Daoism did not have the same effect as in the Koguryo Kingdom. The philosophy was only briefly introduced and was merely a passing vogue. Nevertheless the thoughts of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu had some influence through syncretized treatises linking it to Buddhism and Confucianism.

Of the Three Kingdoms, the Silla Kingdom left the most substantial legacy of Daoism. Silla received Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching* in 738 from the Tang Monarchy.[84] As a result, Silla scholars went to the Tang Monarchy in order to study Daoism. This led to Lao Tzu being used in civil service examinations, which led to a popularization of Lao Tzu among the public. However, the characteristic of Silla Daoism concentrated on the practice and training of one's mind or self-discipline. Its most distinctive mark can be found in the rule of the *Hwarang* (화랑), an elite armed force noted for its disciplined composure, simplicity, relaxation and harmony, every one of these a component of philosophical Daoism. It is that self-disciplinary aspect that dominated Silla Daoism.

Sin-Sun Sasang (신선사상, Manaism)[85], which was relatively widespread within the Silla Kingdom, had its roots in folk beliefs and practices, but it was also influenced by

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[83] Pyong-jo Chong, *Hanguk Chonggyo Sasang: Pulgyo, Togyo* (Korean Religious Thought: Buddhism and Daoism) (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991), 232-235.

[84] Chu-Hwan Cha, *Hanguk Togyo Sasang Yongu* (The Research on the Korean Daoism) (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1983),16.

[85] *Sin-Sun* or Mana is a super natural and mystical power, and standing midway between the Supreme Being and human beings.

Korean Daoism.[86] The *Sin-Sun Sasang* in its original form was taken from the adoration of nature, and grew out of its animistic character. Indeed the term *Sin-Sun Sasang* is an important one in Korean Daoism, reflecting the modification of Chinese Daoism made by Korean *Sin-Sun Sasang*. By the mid-period of the Koryo Dynasty (935-1392), even *Sin-Sun Sasang* had become so intermixed with Buddhism that its original ideology was hardly perceptible. Furthermore, considering that the primary ruling ideology of the Koryo Dynasty was Buddhism, Daoism mainly acted as a supplementary idea under the influence of Buddhism. It was not the foremost ruling philosophy for the Koryo Dynasty even in this, its most popular period.

The Cho-sun (1392-1910) Dynasty was predominantly set by Neo-Confucianism as a state religion, and was accepted by the Royal Court as well as lesser aristocrats but not by the common people. This newly-embraced state religion was unable to provide an adequate religious focus for the oppressed populace. Meanwhile, at least at the start of the Cho-sun Dynasty, Daoist literature was quite popular among groups of the intelligentsia. These groups published and produced various pieces of literature, the result of their academic research on Daoism. While it is undeniable that there was a clear divergence between Confucianism and Daoism, the intelligentsia's writing on Daoism was predominantly from a Confucian perspective.[87]

However, there was a growing opposition from the main Confucian group against Daoism, and it began to be perceived as "heretical." Consequently the number of

[86] Pyong-jo Chong, 237.

[87] Ibid., 102.

practitioners of Cho-sun Daoism was exceptionally reduced and the volume of Daoism was cut to a great extent. Eventually, when the Japanese Invasion took place in 1592, Cho-sun Daoism was systematically abolished. Since that time until the present day, Korean Daoism has been marginalized not only by the Korean Royal Court, Confucians, and Buddhists but also by society as a whole. With such a historical framework, today only a handful of Daoists exist throughout Korea.[88]

In diffuse ways, however, Korean Daoism survived to influence all classes of the Korean people. A clear instance of the effect of Daoism among Koreans is the pursuit of good fortune and long-life, a part of Daoist religion rather than Daoist philosophy. Moreover, it affected the lives of everyday people in other ways, including geomancy, fortune-telling, prognostication, and folk literature. In this respect, "Korean Daoism tended to reinforce a kind of fatalism. It emphasized making do with one's lot, carefulness and even submission, and at the same time, legitimated certain animist trends in popular culture," said Pyong-jo Chong."[89]

The capacity of humans to master things and govern people is questioned in the Chuang Tzu. Incapable of saving themselves through their own isolating activities and projects, humans mutilate themselves through the violence they inflict on nature. Chong clarifies that "reducing the infinite variety and variability of the world to the simulated order of usefulness and purposiveness, human life is haunted and undermined by the useless, the non-intentional, and the counter-purposive, which are the results of its own

[88] Cha, 21.

[89] Chong, 244.

categories and practices."[90] Chuang Tzu concluded from this that one could do the most by "doing nothing" (*wu-wei*) and undoing the categories and values that erroneously seem basic to human existence. Since only *wu-wei* responsively mirrors and attends to the immanent spontaneity of nature, the minimalism of "doing less" interrupts the "maximalism of incessant intervention, production, and consumption."[91] If our ecological plight is due to the irresponsible assertion of human independence from and mastery over nature, including the implicit ascendancy of this paradigm within environmentalist activism, then "Daoist insights into the hubris of separation and assertion are not crippling but salutary."[92]

Chuang Tzu's ethical naturalism are apparent in Korean ecological ethics. The natural world operates spontaneously, fluidly, and through alteration, self-generatively transforming itself according to its own flows, rhythms, and seasons.[93] It has its own timeliness that cannot be fixed according to a predetermined principle or origin, something that the Chuang Tzu stresses we cannot know. Running through the theses of the intrinsic difference and relative parity of the innumerable things is this third thesis of the "naturalness of becoming, transition, and transformation."[94] This self-transformation of nature involves, as Chu-Whan Cha notes, "the concrete mutuality of things such that a

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[90] Ibid.

[91] Ames and Hall, 23.

[92] Ibid., 24.

[93] Ibid., 29.

[94] Ibid., 42.

person can dream of being a butterfly, life is inherently tied to death, the seemingly monstrous and misshapen most manifestly live the *Dao*, and the masculine finds *Dao* only by recourse to the feminine."[95]

However, over all the most unique and remarkable folklore legacy of Korean Daoism is *Sin-Sun Sasang*. Both China and Korea share an authoritarian history. The *Sin-Sun Sasang* can be seen as an anti-thesis against this authoritarianism. Duk-Whang Kim illustrates that "*Sin-Sun* is a super-historical and super-natural power, which resists and is hostile to conventional systems or authoritarian restriction."[96] This critical and resistant consciousness of *Sin-Sun* manifested itself in the advocacy as well as in the pursuit of "anti-values," against secular-overpowering fixed-values. By way of example one can examine the characteristics within a *Sin-Sun* tale. Many female *Sin-Sun* appear in these tales, and very frequently their magical abilities are stronger than their counterparts' male *Sin-Sun*. Considering Oriental society is a male-dominated one and traditionally accepted the predominance of male over female, the *Sin-Sun* tale shows the reversed value of this society and can be seen as "embodying a rudimentary feminism."[97] The *Sin-Sun* tales have a common point: all of them refuse to accept the authoritarian order in Korea, and they choose rather the adversity of their life. Moreover, *Sin-Sun* pursues eternal life through protecting and helping other creatures. The *Sin-Sun* lives with everyday people,

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[95] Cha, 22.

[96] Duk-Whang Kim, *Hankuk jongkyo ui yuksa* (A History of Religions in Korea) (Seoul: Daeji Moonhwa-sa, 1988), 4-7.

[97] Ibid., 9.

trying to alleviate their suffering by any means possible. One aspect of the *Sin-Sun* character can be compared to that of the legendary Robin Hood. Both fought for the rights of all oppressed peoples. Perhaps that is why the idea of *Sin-Sun* could only be transmitted via folklore.

In conclusion, the above research shows that Korean philosophical Daoism was poorly developed as an abstract theory. Religious Daoism flourished briefly, but mainly within the Royal Court as a means of rite and ceremony. Popular cultural forms of Daoism have existed, mainly in practices of fortune telling, geomancy and animism.[98] Korean ecological ethics has been influenced by these Daoistic practices. Insofar as Daoism had popular appeal, it was mainly through *Sin-Sun Sasang*, through a "Robin Hood" figure, and this can be seen as a rather minor reflection of the initial flourishing of philosophical Daoism in Korea.

Korean Buddhist Ecological Ethics

In Buddhist ethics, the basic common understanding is that humanity is a part of nature in such a way that if people abuse it, then negative consequences come up. Buddhism holds that nature is able to communicate. Doug Codiga illustrates this view by suggesting that "nature speaks clearly, but not necessarily with a human tongue."[99] One of the obvious examples that the Buddha taught on how to conserve nature is easily

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[98] Cha, 97.

[99] Doug Codiga, "Zen Practice and a Sense of Place," in Allan Hunt Badiner, ed., *Dharma Gaia* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1990), 108.

witnessed in any Korean Zen Buddhist temple. Monks never throw "their waste or leftover food into rivers and lakes, and they are urged to guard the lives of all living beings abiding there" due to the Buddha's rules "forbidding his disciples to contaminate water resources."[100] This is one example of the inherent Buddhist views on nature. The following explanation from Codiga shows the symbiotic idea of Buddhist practice and a sense of place:

> If you learn where your tap water comes from and where the garbage goes; if you know where the sun first appears on the horizon in June and how it is different in December, you have cultivated a sense of place. . . . The practice is a means to identify with the local ecology and to express this identification. To act upon this identity is to protect our place from harm, as we would protect any loved one.[101]

In Korea, Buddhism has coexisted and been mixed with Daoism, Confucianism, and also traditional religion for centuries. Littleton explains that Buddhism is,

> . . . amenable to expansion because of the universality of the Buddha's teaching. Being linked to neither a specific place nor a single society, Buddhism has generally managed to incorporate the local customs and beliefs that it has encountered in its expansion, especially those that are traditionally associated with the social life.[102]

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[100] Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, "Early Buddhist Views on Nature," in Badiner, *Dharma Gaia*, 11.

[101] Codiga, 109-10.

[102] Littleton, *The Sacred East*, 56.

Buddhism and traditional religion have been fused into a unique Korean culture. Both are "based in the experience of direct practical realization, of direct knowing, of communion, of understanding through experience, of seeing through the eyes of compassion."[103] They also both emphasize simplicity in lifestyle.

From the Buddhist point of view, nothing is permanent: no happiness or pain will last forever and there will always be "Suffering" (*Go* in Korean; *Duhkha* in Sanskrit). Buddha taught the "Four Noble Truths," which reflect the content of the Buddha's enlightenment and are solutions that lead to the "Cessation of Suffering." The first truth is the "Truth of Suffering."[104] In relation to it, Sulak Sivaraksa criticizes today's global development as follows:

> It seems to be a celebration of a way of life that not only leads away from this Truth, but also discourages people from even believing this Truth exists. Global development springs from a civilization that claims to adore life, but actually starves it of any real meaning—a civilization that endlessly speaks of making people "happy" but in fact blocks their way to the source of real peace and happiness.[105]

The second is the recognition of the "Cause/Origin of Suffering"—greed, hatred, and delusion. Padmasiri de Silva explains in detail:

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[103] Joan Halifax, "The Third Body," in Badiner, *Dharma Gaia*, 34.

[104] Codiga, 112.

[105] Sulak Sivaraksa, "A Buddhist Perception of a Desirable Society," in J. Ronald Engel and J. Gibb Engel, eds., *Ethics of Environment and Development: Global Challenge and International Response* (London: Belhaven Press, 1990), 203.

> Excessive greed finds expression in life orientations bound to extreme sensuality and hedonism and in limitless expansion and possessiveness. Hatred is expressed by a destructive and violent attitude toward oneself, others, and the natural world. Destructive patterns of consumption generate unending cycles of desires and satisfactions.[106]

He points out this relation in the Buddhist context to the roots of ecological disaster and recovery in our times.

The "basic orientation for the ethics of Buddhism is embedded in the Noble Eight-fold Path,"[107] and one can overcome suffering by following this orientation through the practice of a "right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and a right concentration." It is also described as the Middle Path that teaches the way between the two extremes. All practice must come from attempts to "cultivate awareness and less egocentricity."[108]

One then reaches the third truth—the cessation of suffering and the way to achieve this truth. In the Buddha's words, "He who sees *duhkha* sees the arising of it, sees also the cessation of it, and sees also the path leading to the cessation of *duhkha*."[109] Therefore, the Buddhist idea of "being awake" is always important. Compassion toward others is

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[106] Padmasiri de Silva, "Buddhist Environmental Ethics," in Badiner, *Dharma Gaia*, 17.

[107] Padmasiri de Silva, *Environmental Philosophy and Ethics in Buddhism* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1998), 55.

[108] Sivaraksa, 173.

[109] Callicott, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, 235.

possible only after inner strength is cultivated by practicing meditation and wisdom to develop the inner-self. Sivaraksa insists that in Buddhism, "when we practice wisdom we see the connection to others socially and to nature ecologically."[110] Thus we are not a separate entity living life.

From the Korean Zen Buddhist perspective, an individual being cannot be in isolation, but is always "interconnected and interdependent." The metaphysical implications of the sense of interconnectedness are caught in the jeweled Indra Net, where each jewel reflects all the others in the universe, in the *Hwa-um Kyung* (in Korean 화엄경, *Ganda-vyuha Sutra*; in Sanskrit). *Hwa-um* in Korean means "flower decoration," and its two key precepts are Emptiness (*Sunyata* in Sanskrit) and Form (*Rupam* in Sanskrit). Christmas Humphreys explains:

> Emptiness is not a somewhat existing beside something, it is not a separate independent existence, nor does it mean extinction. . . . it co-exists with form. . . . form is emptiness and emptiness is form . . . indicating "absence of things," "unoccupied space." . . . their relation is one of "perfect mutual unimpeded solution."[111]

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[110] Sivaraksa, 219.

[111] Christmas Humphreys, ed., *The Wisdom of Buddhism* (London: Curzon Press, 1987), 163-64.

This is reminiscent of Francis Cook's understanding of Buddhist philosophy as "there is no center, or perhaps if there is none, it is everywhere. Man certainly is not the center, nor is some god."[112]

The metaphor of the profound "interconnectedness" of the Indra Net is, in Ken Jones's opinion,

> [The Indra Net is] an excellent example of an expression of root *Dharma* of great ecological and social potential. At each intersection of Indra's Net is a light-reflecting jewel (that is, a phenomenon, entity, thing), and each jewel contains another net, *ad infinitum*. The jewel at each intersection exists only as a reflection of all the others and therefore has no self-nature. Yet it also exists as a separate entity to sustain the others. Each and all exist only in their mutuality.[113]

From the ecological point of view, as stated in one of the components in Indra Net, "Nothing is wasted. Everything that is taken from the Earth is given back, so that all life on Earth is really part of one life. Even death brings new life."[114] Eco-Buddhism is best expressed in the speech of the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh:

> In one sheet of paper, you can see the sun, the clouds, the forest, and even the logger. The paper is made of non-paper elements. The entire world conspired to create it, and exists within it. We, ourselves, are made of non-self elements, the sun, the plants, the bacteria, the water and the atmosphere. Breathing out, we realize the

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[112] Francis H. Cook, "The Jewel Net of Indra," in Callicott and Ames, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, 216.

[113] Ken Jones, "Getting Out of Our Own Light," in Badiner, *Dharma Gaia*, 186-96.

[114] Halifax, "The Third Body," 30.

> atmosphere is made of all of us. I am, therefore you are. You are, therefore I am. We inter-are.[115]

For example, one of the basic rules for Buddhist morality is "Do not kill." This rule is not merely a prohibition against human beings killing each other but toward all living beings. As Hanh's speech suggests, we are deeply implicated in all life and in all killing. Our happiness is interdependent with the society and our harmony is interdependent with that of nature. In parallel with the anti-anthropocentric ideas of deep ecologists that assert nonhuman life has a value in itself, what Buddhism tells us is that humans are part of the whole ecosystem; and at the same time are responsible for other creatures. As with the jewels in Indra Net, "to become fully human is to accept being qualitatively different and yet the same as the rest of planetary life; to accept full responsibility while remaining unreservedly at one with nature."[116]

As Mary Evelyn Tucker explains, the East Asian, indeed the Korean, traditions show the "seamless interconnection between the divine human and natural world"[117] and characterize these traditions "as an anthropocosmic worldview." They also illustrate well that in these traditions there is no emphasis on radical transcendence as there is in the West. "Rather, there is a cosmology of a continuity of creation stressing the dynamic

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[115] Sivaraksa, 177.

[116] Jones, "Getting Out of Our Own Light," 189.

[117] Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams, ed., *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1997), xxvii.

movements of nature through the seasons and the agricultural cycles."[118] Also, their discovery that "most indigenous peoples have ecological ethics embedded in their worldview"[119] is true in the Korean case.

Relations with Contemporary Korean Ecological Spirituality

From a spiritual perspective, the contemporary ecological problems and challenges are the results of humankind's consciousness. They can ultimately be viewed as spiritual issues demanding spiritual responses. And if either spiritual institutions or people of faith fail to respond to these challenges, they forfeit to a great extent their moral authority and position of leadership within not only their various local communities but also the world community.

If so, how will spirituality respond to these issues, especially in Korean contexts? Some spiritual traditions of all shades and colors have a great deal to offer when challenged by the contemporary problems and challenges. However, what each spiritual tradition concretely brings to the table by way of answer can only be ascertained through active involvement in concrete issues and "through reflection on that tradition's particular experiences, history, and philosophy."[120] Therefore, if it is the case that all Korean spiritual traditions have something different to offer when faced with the major issues

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[118] Ibid., xxviii.

[119] Ibid., 187.

[120] Ibid., 202.

and problems of the day, then specifically: what are the characteristics of ecological spirituality among Korean contemporary religions that Western traditions do not teach?

The Indramang Community: Korean Socioecological Consciousness in Practice

Korean traditional religions, especially Buddhism, Daoism, and *Donghak*, oppose dominant Western perspectives such as dualism and atomism by showing an alternative attitude toward nature in which humans are regarded as a part of nature. On the basis of the Korean religions mentioned above, the Indramang was started in 1997 by people who had the desire to return to farmland and practice sustainable agriculture. The community respects ecological spirituality in Korean traditional religions, especially more focused on Buddhist ecological ethics, and Indramang, with their *Guinong* (귀농)[121] School on the temple site, is one of the main educational organizations of the National *Guinong* Movement Headquarters in Korea.

Indramang[122] values are an attempt to revive a traditional Korean ecological spirituality that views nature as a reality and in which the concepts of humans and nature describe integrated and interrelated parts of the same whole. Such a spiritual view is shared historically by most Koreans and hence people are familiar with the interconnection of all beings. The dominant Western cultural perspectives of competitive individualism and capitalist individualism are more recent developments in Korean

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[121] *Guinong* literally means "back to the land," or "return to farms."

[122] Indramang is a worldview of Buddhism. There is a kind of a web, which is linked by marbles that reflect each other. According to Buddhist ecological ethics, all marbles denote humans and creatures that are closely interrelated.

society. In order to accept the deep ecologists' paradigm that interprets and adopts Eastern ecological ethics, a revolutionary change to the conventionally dominant Western value system needs to be undertaken. It can be very new and frightening when ideas such as "we are all one" are first faced. Deep ecologists' "new" values are in fact "old" from the Korean perspective. In contrast, the Indramang are eager to learn from successful cases from the West, in terms of new organic agricultural skills, community life, and so on, in order to model their practices on them. To this extent there is a curious parallel between the "new" thinkers and activists, especially deep ecologists and those in the Indramang who are struggling to bring back their traditional way of life within the context of Western-style modernization, industrialization, and globalization.[123]

The Indramang Community is functioning, on the one hand, as a resting place from the mainstream world, and on the other, as a place which offers motives to change the world. Community members are oriented primarily toward optimistic thinking such as the building of a new society and new institutions rather than merely challenging the status quo. They focus on the transformation of the life world; however, in the end, they expect this movement has the potential to change the wider society. They have shown that certain things can be achieved, such as the development of alternative medical treatment, ethical consumerism, organic food production, and simple lifestyles.[124] Besides, all work is related to organic/natural farming which involves intensive manual labor, and people often intentionally join in the first place for a life associated with

[123] Indramang Community, *Indramang* 21 (2005): 53.

[124] Ibid., 54.

manual work. Contemporary Korean society continues to admire the value of mental labor; yet, it holds manual labor in contempt and has subsequently neglected and undervalued it. Hence, emphasizing manual work in the Indramang is itself an inspiring practice.

Because the Indramang Community's major aim is to establish a desirable local eco-community, it emphasizes interdependence with the local area. A focus on social and cultural interrelations with the local area is therefore especially important to the Indramang. As a result, a compromise with local culture becomes inevitable. It can also be pointed out that the local culture near the Indramang is similar to that within the community. It was once a rural village with mainly elderly people, empty houses, and damaged farmland.[125] The Indramang Community has attempted to revive local agriculture and brought in many young people. Hence, their socioecological ethics came from religious traditions. This is an important basis for thinking about possible futures, and their endeavor is necessary for the success sought by wider socio-ethical movements on the basis of Korean ecological spirituality. The relation between the Korean multi-religious tradition and contemporary socioecological movements is well exemplified in this community.

In this chapter, I have traced Korean ecological ethics in the *Donghak* tradition and their relation with Korean socioecological spirituality. To pursue the historical background and development of the *Donghak* tradition, I have described Korean religious traditions such as Dan-gun myth, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, and their

[125] Ibid., 61.

relations with Christianity. I have also proposed the Indramang Community as an example of Korean socioecological conscious community. In my assessment, Su-woon did a spiritual reinterpretation of the ethical issues in his world, and built a new way of life with "liberation consciousness" in *Donghak*. He was a liberation scholar of his time, and with an eagerness of pursuing socioecological spirituality, he made a dialogue between his multi-religious situations and socio-political circumstances. *Donghak*'s socioecological consciousness has produced socioecological spirituality and some exemplary centers such as Indramang Community.

In the next chapter, I will represent two comparative constructs with analyzing the relationships between sacramental commons and *Donghak*, and between Jürgen Moltmann and *Donghak* in order to build a common socioecological vision. The comparisons of the themes of "relational consciousness," "relational community," "interconnectedness," and "creation spirituality" in sacramental commons, Moltmann, and *Donghak*, will show not only how these approaches are complementary, but also how the interrelatedness between the divine, humans, and nature is possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARATIVE ECOLOGICAL ETHICS
–*SACRAMENTAL COMMONS* AND *DONGHAK*

Comparative Constructs: *Sacramental Commons* and *Donghak*

To construct balanced moral views and practical approaches, a comparative approach is a meaningful method of ethics. Social, economic, and ecological circumstances have been integrated in comparative ecological ethics as empirical data and diverse cultural backgrounds have correlated. Since all societies have their unique ethical traditions and practices derived from them, comparative studies have explored similarities and differences between ethical theories and practices of diverse peoples. As a socioecological comparison between the West and the East, the dissertation will analyze and connect sacramental commons and *Donghak*.

Sacramental Commons

The theological resources for an ecological renewal of faith can be found not only in biblical texts and doctrinal tradition, but also in the "sacramental" character of nature itself. In this understanding, nature in all of its beauty and diversity reveals the divine mystery–not just to Christians, but to people of all traditions. (When people of faith have no sacramental tradition, a complementary [but not congruent] term would be "sacred commons.")[1] The ecological implications of sacramentality have been expressed by several Christian ethicists, including James Nash in *Loving Nature: Ecological*

[1] John Hart, *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science, and Space* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 181.

Integrity and Christian Responsibility; Sallie McFague in *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*; Larry Rasmussen in *Earth Community Earth Ethics*; and John Hart in *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics*. Their common idea was that since Christian faith teaches that the world reveals God and is the locus of God's engagement with humanity, it clearly follows that Christians should be cautious about their impact on that world, and should treat natural systems with respect.

James Nash describes this well:

> Nature is sacred by association, as the bearer of the sacred. We are standing perpetually on holy ground, because God is present not only in the burning bush but in the nurturing soil and atmosphere, indeed, sharing the joys and agonies of all creatures. The sacramental presence of the Spirit endows all of creation with a sacred value and dignity.[2]

The natural world is important, in part, because it provides access to the God who created it. Ecological degradation is sinful. When people degrade Earth, they abandon their place within creation and set themselves against God's creative work. The nonhuman world should be preserved: it is a sign of God's presence and thereby provides a means of moving closer to God.

Sacramentality extends beyond particular material substances and particular rituals to emphasize that the incarnation of God on Earth in Jesus Christ signifies something about the ongoing relationship between Creator and creation. If we want an ethic capable of responding to the full dimensions of the ecological crisis, we must learn

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[2] James A. Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1991), 115.

once more to revere the natural world itself for showing forth to us the sacred reality that underlies it.[3] We cannot do this without the help of contemporary science and cosmology. Our spirituality has become so obsessed with themes of history and human freedom, so concerned with interpreting written texts, that it has lost touch with the sacramentality of nature. It is now time to resacramentalize ethics.

Western religious tradition has unnecessarily subordinated creation–and by implication sacramentalism–to the theme of redemption.[4] An exclusive emphasis on redemption has led Christian theology to exaggerate the "Fall" not only of humankind but also of the natural world. The assumption has been that redemption would be a momentous event only in proportion to the abysmal depths of a primordial Fall. By overemphasizing the "Fall" of both humanity and nature "in the beginning," nature has been made at times to seem perverse and therefore undeserving of our care. By exaggerating the "Fall" of nature we have too easily lost sight of the original goodness of the entire creation that God declared to be "good." At the same time, an undue focus on the human need for redemption from evil has distracted us from the travail of the entire

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[3] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 1988), 23.

[4] According to Matthew Fox, the Christian tradition has focused too strongly on fall/redemption theology. He disapproves of this dualistic approach, and points out that "to teach original sin and never to teach original blessing creates pessimism and cynicism." He further criticizes the original sin focus as being a key in separating humans from the rest of creation and creator. See Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1986), 11. Similarly, Thomas Berry denotes that a recovery of the sense of the sacred in the natural world as a "primary revelation of the divine" would rightly "diminish our emphasis on redemption experience in favor of a greater emphasis on creation processes." See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 81.

creation, which also "groans" for radical renewal.[5] The renewal of nature to which Christian faith alludes need not be postponed until the "last day," but it can begin to become a reality here and now.

The sacramental commons approach emphasizes the present renewal of nature when it interprets "sin" to mean more than just our human separation from God or from each other. Sin also has effected the current alienation of nature from humanity, and impedes nature's own creative possibilities as envisaged by God from the outset of creation. Consequently, "redemption" and "reconciliation" must mean not only the restoring of the divine-human relationship, but also, thereby, human responsibility for God's world as evident in human action to heal the entire earth-community and indeed to renew the whole creation.

Hart indicates that a clear articulation of the ecological implications of sacramental theology came in *Renewing the Earth*, the 1991 encyclical letter from the U.S. Catholic Bishops. For Hart, the bishops here lament that "as heirs and victims of the industrial revolution, students of science, and the beneficiaries of technology, urban-dwellers and jet-commuters, twentieth-century Americans have also grown estranged from the natural scale and rhythms of life on earth."[6] This detachment from the nonhuman world is a profound theological problem, they argue, because it dims "that

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[5] Romans 8:22.

[6] John Hart, *What Are They Saying About…Environmental Theology?* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 30.

sense of God's presence in nature."[7] This sacramental argument characterizes ecological degradation as the dangerous destruction of our ability to know and respond to God. Moreover, the bishops assert that sacramentality is a way to reverse the course of ecological degradation:

> Through the created gifts of nature, men and women encounter their Creator. The Christian vision of a sacramental universe – a world that discloses the Creator's presence by visible and tangible signs – can contribute to making the earth a home for the human family once again.[8]

Sacramentality thus provides both a motivation to know the world better and a means by which to understand how we should care for it by feeling truly at home within it.

Interpreting the bishops' encyclical, Hart comments that they seek to develop a "sacramental consciousness" that inspires "commitment to the well-being of Earth, the community of life generally, and people and peoples."[9] Sacramentality is not, therefore, merely an idea or distant and abstract theological claim; it also includes an experience of God in the world. As such it can inspire people to act and structure their lives differently. Sacramentality is an attempt to change how Christians behave by altering the ways we think and feel about creation.[10] When people gain a sacramental consciousness, they begin to understand that the degradation of the natural environment is a sin against God

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[7] John Hart, *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 15.

[8] Hart, *What Are They Saying About…Environmental Theology?*, 31.

[9] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 62.

[10] Ibid., 66.

and a depletion of their ability to know God. This consciousness teaches that Christian response to ecological degradation can involve appreciation of the world around us as a path to God and a teacher of our own place within God's creation. When we live out this sacramental consciousness, we acquire courage and resolve to change so that we might live responsibly in this world.[11]

Moreover, in *Sacramental Commons* Hart focuses on the loving and creative presence of the Spirit in creation, illustrating an approach from within the Catholic tradition but certainly not in a narrow way. He draws on a wide variety of sources including insights from Earth-oriented biblical passages and from such people as Maximus the Confessor, Hildegard of Bingen, St. Francis, John Muir, and Native Americans Black Elk, Philip Deere, and David Sohappy, Sr.[12] He further offers a compelling vision of the Earth as a commons of divine creativity and human response in interaction with all living and nonliving nature. Hart defines "sacraments" as "signs of the creating Spirit that draw people into grace-filled moments permeated by a heightened awareness of divine presence and engagement with divine being."[13] Natural sacraments are places, events, or creatures in nature that simultaneously draw people into relationship with the Spirit and with all living and nonliving creation. The Earth serves as a sacramental commons, a means of grace. One of Hart's key contributions is to affirm that

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[11] Ibid., 62.

[12] Ibid., xiv.

[13] Ibid.

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, works sacramentally not only through the church but also through creation.[14]

According to Hart, the key to promoting and protecting the sacramental commons is to undergo a "change of consciousness from an anthropocentric domination of nature to a relational interdependence with creation"[15] and then to act accordingly. He affirms the intrinsic value of all members of the biotic community as well as of abiotic nature. Intrinsic value entails natural rights; thus, natural rights cannot be limited to human rights. He seeks to identify the responsibilities human beings have for other creatures. These responsibilities flow from a "relational consciousness respectful of all creatures."[16] For him this relational consciousness is developed by cultivating an awareness of the sacredness of creation and an appreciation of the Earth as the "common ground shared with all life."[17]

Hart's sacramental commons approach envisions true community, not merely causal interdependence, with the natural world. We can attain "communion not only among humans but between humans and other creatures and between all life, Earth, and the creating immanent and transcendent Spirit."[18] He sees a direct relationship between vision and action, spirituality and ethics, and consciousness and conduct. "If people view

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[14] Ibid., xv.

[15] Ibid., 117.

[16] Ibid., 181.

[17] Ibid., 203.

[18] Ibid., 77.

the commons as sacramental, presented by the Spirit… they should be inspired to treat their bioregion with respect, to care for it responsibly, to seek signs of the Spirit in it, and to distribute its goods justly."[19]

The sacramental commons approach is a powerful idea and experience because it both draws on deep traditions in Christian faith and responds to the current and urgent issues of ecological devastation. Ecological ethicists frequently stress that this approach is an idea with deep roots, a faithful communication of the Christian tradition that has long expressed an immanent, incarnational, and sacramental presence of God in the world.[20] The sacramental commons approach does not call us as believers to change the object of our worship or to reimagine God but rather to recognize the importance of the natural world in the faith we inherit.

Along these lines Larry Rasmussen is careful to distinguish nature from the divine in his discussion of sacramentality: "To identify something earthly as holy and sacred is not to say it *is* God. Rather it is *of* God; God is present in its presence."[21] John Haught is even more careful and limited in his use of language, emphasizing that seeing the world as sacramental is fundamentally different from seeing it as sacred: "Nature is worth saving not because it is sacred, but because it is sacramental, capable of mediating to our

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 109.

[21] Larry Rasmussen, *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 239.

religious awareness the otherwise hidden mystery of the divine."[22] While these thinkers define "sacred" in different ways, both stress that sacramentality is a faithful strand of Christianity, calling believers to see the natural world as a bearer of God but not as God.[23] This approach about valuing, respecting, and appreciating the natural world is much more important, vital, and faithful to the Christian tradition than worshiping nature.

Definitely because it is a faithful inheritance of tradition, sacramentality is a powerful response to critics who argue that Christianity is too otherworldly and heaven obsessed to respond to the contemporary crisis of ecological degradation. The biologist Edward O. Wilson writes: "The most dangerous of devotions, in my opinion, is the one endemic to Christianity: *I was not born to be of this world*."[24] This is a familiar and common critique, and one that fairly indicts some parts of the Christian tradition that are dangerously focused on ideas of heaven and the afterlife to the exclusion of this world. Sacramentality, however, is a deeply rooted tradition of the faith that moves in the opposite direction, emphasizing God's presence in the world and thereby demonstrating that Christianity is not exclusively about a transcendent, otherworldly God. This approach is therefore proof that otherworldliness is not endemic to Christianity, or at least not necessarily so.

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[22] John Haught, *The Promise of Nature: Ecology and Cosmic Purpose* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 78.

[23] This concept is very similar to *Shi Chonju* of *Donghak*.

[24] Edward O. Wilson, *Consilience*, 245. Decades after he wrote this, Wilson wrote an endorsement for *Sacramental Commons*. Simultaneously, Hart wrote one for Wilson's *The Creation: An Appeal To Save Life on Earth*.

Hart's work is explicit about this point, highlighting the sacramental tradition as a corrective to Christianity's overemphasis "on a heavenly afterlife," an emphasis that should never take precedence over "present 'earthly' concerns, occupations, and preoccupations."[25] Sallie McFague embraces Christian sacramentality for the same reason, appreciative of its potential as "one of the few traditions within Christianity that … has included nature as a concern of God and a way to God."[26] Contemporary sacramental thinkers emphasize the presence of God immanent in Earth and the importance of human life on Earth, a vital corrective to those who believe Christianity celebrates heaven to the exclusion of this world. Consequently, sacramentality calls us to commit to God's world rather than turn away from it.

Emphasizing the importance of sacramentality for contemporary ecological thinking, Hart offers an extended reflection of "sacramental universe" and then works to localize it. While stressing the presence and revelation of the Creator throughout the entirety of the creation is important, the complementary notion of a "sacramental commons" focuses on "a moment and locus of human participation in the interactive presence and caring compassion of the Spirit who is immanent and participates in a complex cosmic dance of energies, elements, entities, and events."[27] The commons exists on a smaller scale, implying that God is revealed and present in *this* community at *this* time. While the sacramental universe makes a claim about the eternal nature of creation,

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[25] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 34.

[26] Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 184.

[27] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, xviii.

the sacramental commons approach refers to a more localized, particular, and individual or communal social experience. It attends to more distinct spaces and times with more careful detail. Hart explains that the sacramental commons approach is an important localization of the sacramental universe because people can often recognize God's presence and mystery in the world when their attention shifts "from the macro to the micro, from the cosmos to the commons."[28]

The sacramental commons approach adds indispensable ingredients to the larger project of formulating a socioecological ethics. Today Christian ethics in particular needs to retrieve a sacramental sense of the cosmos. Our ancient intuition of the revelatory character of the universe is a significant ethical and ecological contribution to this approach. It allows us to recognize the intrinsic relation between religious faith and contemporary ecological concern. The sacramental commons approach helps us to realize that without the freshness of air, the purity of water, and the fertility of soil, the power of our most enduring symbols of God is diminished or lost. The integrity of nature is inseparable from the flourishing of religion and ethics. If we lose nature, as Thomas Berry points out, we will also lose God.[29]

The sacramental commons approach, however, is unable to give us a fully integrated ecological ethics if we do not embrace its complementary understandings of "relational consciousness" and "relational community." Hart states, for example,

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[28] Ibid., 61.

[29] Thomas Berry, *The Great Work* (New York: Bell Tower, 1999), 9.

> The relational consciousness and the relational community together express a sense of communion among member individuals and species of biokind, between biokind and Earth, and between biokind and the Spirit. They express the meaning of the "reign of God" advocated by Jesus. The evolving social reality of Spirit-Earth-spirit engagement is the creation commons community, with its creation-centered consciousness.[30]

An incomplete understanding of what a sacramental commons means can easily allow us to overlook the pivotal motif of ecological relationality that underscores particularity and universality, similarity and difference, and unity and diversity between divine being and nature.

A comparison of the themes of "relational consciousness," "relational community," and "interconnectedness" in sacramental commons and *Donghak*, will reveal not only how these approaches overlap or are at least complementary, but also how the interrelatedness between the divine, humans, and nature is possible without becoming meaningless fusion and rootless separation.

The *Donghak* Approach

Su-woon's Social Background and Religious Experience

The emergence of *Donghak* out of total crisis in the 1860s Korean context was inescapably related with Su-woon's concrete experiences of personal wandering and misery, economic poverty and social discrimination in his own family background. Most of all, his religious experience of *Hanulnim* out of his miserable social reality was the most crucial motivation for the rise of *Donghak*. Su-woon was born on December 18,

[30] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 200.

1824 at Yongdam near Kyongju, a southeastern part of Korea. His father named Kun-Am belonged to the *yangban* (noble) class and also was a learned Confucian scholar but was not employed by the government. Therefore, his family lived in poverty as he taught Chinese characters in his village.[31]

Unfortunately his two wives died one after another without child. At the age of sixty-three, he met a wandering widow named Han. Su-woon was born as an illegitimate child between them because his mother was a concubine. He was born into an ambiguous social status in which he was educated in the *yangban* family of his father about the literatures of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism but he was not eligible to become a government official.[32] This meant that he was alienated from a good and successful life by his birth regardless of his personal capability and academic education. When he lost his mother at the age of ten and also his father at the age of seventeen, his situation became worse. His illegitimacy at birth and his situation as an orphan in poverty drove him into personal despair and frustration and also into keen awareness of social contradictions and all forms of injustice in the Confucian hierarchical system.

Three years after the death of his father Su-woon married a woman named Park, suffered severe poverty, and could hardly support his family. Not able to consider continuing studies, he decided to become a wandering merchant as a way of maintaining a living for his family. He could not have a government position due to his illegitimacy at birth and he did not even know how to do farming which was the basic way of living for

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[31] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi* (The Story of Donghak) (Seoul: Sol, 1994), 9.

[32] Ibid., 10.

most ordinary people. He started his wandering journey at his age of twenty.[33] His journey as a merchant seemed to stem from both his economic crisis and from his longing for a new way. The motivation of his wandering journey not only came from the personal dimension of his economic, psychological, and spiritual crisis, but also his deep social consciousness of the contradictions that he had experienced from birth.[34]

His ten-year wandering made him finally see that the Confucian Chosun dynasty was in total crisis. He described this moral and spiritual chaos in human relations: "King is no king, government officer is no government officer, father is no father, son is no son… The public mind and morals are extremely ruined…"[35] He also deplored the total corruption of the entire society: "The wisdom of Yo and Soon, and the virtue of Confucius and Mencius could not even save this world."[36] He concluded that neither Confucianism nor Buddhism could be a philosophy and spirituality for the new world. He also declared that Seohak (Roman Catholicism) was no alternative spirituality to save the misery of people and nation for this crisis:

> These foreigners have no logical sequence in their speaking, nor order in their written books, and no decorum in their worship. They only pray for selfish benefits. They have no proper spirit [*Ki*] to inspire them in their physical life, and there is no

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 11.

[35] Ibid., 13.

[36] "아서라 이세상은 요순지치(堯舜之治)라도 부족시(不足施)요 공맹지덕(孔孟之德)이라도 부족언(不足言)이라." "Mong-joong-no-so-mun-dap-ga (Responsive Song in Dream between the Old and the Young)," in Suk-san Yun, annot., *Juhae Donghak Kyongjeon* (Annotations of Donghak Scripture) (Seoul: Donghak-sa, 2009), 429.

> teaching concerning the true God [*Hanulnim*] in their system. They have an appearance of it, but no reality. It seems to have a kind of thinking, but no incantation[37] [my translation].

During his wandering, Su-woon came to identify his personal and familial crisis with the socio-political and religio-cultural crisis of the entire nation.[38] He stopped traveling in 1854 after ten years in search for the truth and he settled in a remote mountain valley near Ulsan with his family at the age of thirty-one.

It was in this mountain valley that his second spiritual journey began. While we can identify the first journey with his keen realization of social contradictions, the second journey can be identified with a spiritual search for the truth based on his social awareness. In other words, his first journey of ten years seemed to be not particularly spiritual. He attempted to find a new way of living in society; instead he realized his identification with the oppressed people of the lower class who suffered from the total corruption of the entire society.[39]

In March 1855, Su-woon had an unexpected spiritual experience called *ulmyo choso* (을묘 조서) in which he received the Heavenly Book in the year of *ulmyo* (1855).[40] According to this story, a Buddhist monk came to Su-woon one day and gave him a book. Su-woon found this book was not the content of Confucianism and

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[37] "西人 言無次第 書無皀白而 頓無爲天主之端 只祝自爲身之謀 身無氣化之神 學無天主之敎 有形無迹 如思無呪." Ibid., 83-86.

[38] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi*, 21.

[39] Ibid., 26.

[40] Ibid., 27.

Buddhism and he could not understand it. The monk asked him to study it and pray, and he disappeared. This spiritual experience seemed to be a turning point that transformed his way of solving social contradictions into a particularly spiritual approach. Afterward, he dedicated himself to praying to heaven and he meditated twice a day for forty-nine days deep in a mountain in order to attain the Way of the Truth, but he did not achieve it. His desperate spiritual search for the Way resulted in not only a complete loss of his family property, but also an enormous spiritual frustration.[41]

When Su-woon returned to Yongdam in the Kumi Mountain with his family after he had lost all his small fortune and failed to search for the Way, he described his feeling of despair and frustration:

> Pitiful! Pitiful! The fortune of my family is pitiful! I also sinned against my parents after I was born… I wasted time as a man of unfavorable days. I spent almost forty years with doing all human things. As I return to Yongdam in Kumi, what flows is the sound of a stream; what is high is the mountain. As I look around mountains and streams, they remain unchanged. How sorrowful I am who wasn't filial! The flying birds seem to make fun of me.[42]

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[41] Ibid., 29.

[42] "가련(可憐)하다 가련하다 이내가운(家運) 가련하다 나도 또한
출세후(出世後)로 득죄부모(得罪父母) 아닐런가 불효불효(不孝不孝)
못면(免)하니 적세원울(積世怨鬱) 아닐런가 불우시지(不遇時之) 남아(男兒)로서
허송세월(虛送歲月) 하였구나 인간만사(人間萬事) 행(行)하다가
거연사십(遽然四十) 되었더라 사십평생(四十平生) 이뿐인가 무가내(無可奈)라
할길없다 구미용담 찾아오니 흐르나니 물소리요 높으나니 산(山)이로세
좌우산천(左右山川) 둘러보니 산수(山水)는 의구(依舊)하고 초목(草木)은
함정(含情)하니 불효(不孝)한 이내마음 그아니 슬플소냐 오작(烏鵲)은
날아들어 조롱(嘲弄)을 하는듯고." "Yongdamga (The Song of Yongdam)," in Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 401-405.

Su-woon metaphorically portrayed his inner state of disappointment and hopelessness as the birds seeming to ridicule him. As noted above, he always identified his miserable personal crisis with his social awareness of the confusion and suffering of the people in the national crisis.

When he returned to Yongdam with deep feelings of total crisis in October 1859, he was thirty-six years old. He decided to have a final and desperate confrontation with *Hanulnim* in search for the Way. The change of his name to Che-woo (which means to save the ignorant people) demonstrates his firm will and determination to seek the Truth. After the cold and long winter went away, spring came to Yongdam. On April 5, 1860 Su-woon arrived at the final mysterious and spiritual experience. At the revelatory moment, Su-woon understood *Muguk Taedo* (無極大道, 무극대도, the Infinite or Eternal Great Way) for which he had searched for about two decades. He described the mysterious moment of revelation:

> While I felt my body trembling very much and was chilly, outwardly there was the energy (*Ki*) which comes through contact with the mysterious spirit, and inwardly there came down the word of instruction. Though to look at, it was not seen; though to listen, it was not heard. Feeling strange and suspicious in my mind, I asked how this could be after straightening out my confused mind. The reply was "my mind is just your mind."[43]

Though this inexpressible and inexplicable religious experience, Su-woon clearly realized the unity of himself and the Divine. He described this mysterious unity as *Osim chuk*

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[43] "吾亦悚然 只有恨生晩之際 身多戰寒 外有接靈之氣 內有降話之敎 視之不見 聽之不聞 心尙怪訝 修心正氣而問曰 何爲若然也 曰吾心卽汝心也." "Nonhakmoon (Discussion of the Study)," Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 72-76.

Yosim (오심즉여심, my mind is just your mind). Being touched with the Great Energy of the mysterious spirit, he realized that he himself was completely identified with the Ultimate *Ki*. He thus could not see and hear anything in such a mystical unity of the subject and object, himself and the Divine.[44]

Su-woon described more specifically the strange feelings of his body and mind at the unexpected spiritual experience of *Osim chuk Yosim*:

> One day in April, I unexpectedly felt my mind chill and my body trembled. It seemed to get so sick that I could not control my mind and body. And I yet couldn't even figure out what the symptom was. As I couldn't express the confused state, suddenly a mysterious Word was heard from somewhere. In surprise, when I woke up and carefully asked who it was, there was a reply: "Don't be afraid and frightened. People call me *Sangjae* (Superior Ruler or God). Don't you know *Sangjae*?"[45]

In both encounters, Su-woon entered a trance state in which he reached a mystical union of himself and the divine and received a revelation. His spiritual trance shows indeed an influence of mystical experience on the formation of *Donghak*. But his experience of the unity of himself and the divine is different from a shaman's possession of the spirit because of Su-woon's social awareness of the crisis of the people and the nation.[46] *Donghak*'s notion of the divine called *Hanulnim* was employed in different

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[44] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi*, 41.

[45] "不意四月 心寒身戰 疾不得執症 言不得難狀之際 有何仙語 忽入耳中 驚起探問則 曰勿懼勿恐 世人謂我上帝 汝不知上帝耶." "Podukmoon (Spreading of the Virtue)," Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 35-43.

[46] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi*, 49.

terms from other religious traditions such as Daoism (*Sinsun,*신선, *Ki*), Confucianism (*Ki, Sangjae*, 상제, and Heaven), traditional religion (*Gwisin*, 귀신), and Catholicism (the Heavenly Lord). *Hanulnim* includes all the different characters from different religions; i.e., metaphysical or personal, self-centered or ethical, transcendent or immanent. This demonstrates that *Donghak* was the creative synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Korean traditional religion.[47]

The personal and magical dimensions of traditional religion have been transformed into spiritual and ethical ranges in *Donghak*. Daoism, which was associated with traditional religion and *Sinsun Sasang* contributed much to the formation of *Donghak* thought, especially in terms of its core elements such as the One Ultimate *Ki*, and *Ying and Yang*. The moral dimension of Confucianism was creatively translated into ethical and spiritual ranges of *Shi Chonju* in *Donghak*.[48]

Su-woon's spiritual experience also included the vibration of the heaven and earth, the opening of the future, the sense of fullness and joy, and his overflowing will of mission to create the new world. This experience reflects his messianic consciousness to save the people from misery and his utopian vision. The historical realization of *Huchon Gaebyeok* (후천개벽) was clearly declared in the slogans of *Donghak* such as *Boguk Anmin* (보국안민, Protecting the nation and securing peace for the people), *Kwangjae Changsaeng* (광제창생, Saving the people), and *Poduk Chonha* (포덕천하, Spreading

[47] Ibid., 107.

[48] Ibid., 61.

the virtue to the whole world; that is, teaching *Donghak*). The social implication of *Donghak*'s utopian vision lies in its realization in this world.[49]

As noted above, Su-woon's spiritual experience is indispensable in the rise of *Donghak*. Especially, the significance of Su-woon's personal experience of *Osim chuk Yosim* (My mind is also your mind) lies in its relation to social, historical, and ethical dimensions. His spiritual experience did not occur only at the personal and metaphysical levels. It was a result of seeking the Truth for about two decades as he sought a way of delivering the people and the nation from total crisis. Su-woon's personal and spiritual vision was never separated from his social vision. If Su-woon's spiritual experience of the mystical unity of himself and *Hanulnim* is the basis of the rise of *Donghak*, how is this experience possible? How is *Donghak*'s notion of the divine, *Hanulnim*, so inclusive and so relational of very different divine characteristics? This issue of the methodology of *Donghak* will be addressed in the next section.

Su-woon's Bulyon Kiyon as Relational Consciousness

Su-woon described his evolutionary view of reality from which he explained the way of perceiving, experiencing, and embodying the world from the "Bulyon Kiyon (不然其然, 불연기연)" of *Donggyong Daejeon*. The term *Bulyon* literally means "it is not;" while the term *Kiyon* "it is." The two terms have opposite meanings, thus they seem to lie in a contradictory relationship. "It is not" never coexists with "it is." This is the law of contradiction. There should be "it is not" or "it is." This is the law of excluded

[49] Ibid., 62.

middle.[50] Since Aristotle, this formal logic has dominated Western philosophy, more specifically the oppositional mode of thinking represented by hierarchical dualism.[51] Instead of being based on the logic of the dominating relationship, Su-woon stated, the logic of *Bulyon Kiyon* is rooted in all the aspects of life by grasping the interdependent and relational nature of consciousness in the world. According to his logic of life, reality is composed of seemingly opposite categories and principles. One aspect of reality is well grasped from one category and principle. The other aspect of the same reality is well obtained from its opposite. They seem contradictory with each other, but are just different perspectives from which to look at the same reality. According to Su-woon, from one aspect of reality, "it is (*Kiyon*)." From the other aspect of the same reality, "it is not (*Bulyon*)." From one perspective of *Kiyon*, *Bulyon* seems to be a contradiction, and vice versa.[52]

From the holistic and relational perspective of reality, *Bulyon* and *Kiyon* are not simply contradictory but interdependent in a paradoxical unity. In a dynamic unity of two opposites, *Bulyon* becomes *Kiyon* and at the same time *Kiyon* becomes *Bulyon*. Su-woon's evolutionary logic of *Bulyon Kiyon* ("It is not" and "It is") provides a theoretical basis for realizing the interdependent relationship between the divine and humans,

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[50] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyonghak* (Life Thought) (Seoul: Hwanam, 2003), 169.

[51] The dualistic tendencies of perceiving the reality of the world have been dominant in Western culture and Christianity such as mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, spirit/matter, and the divine/mortal dualism. These dualisms see the first of the poles as not simply different but superior and then higher value than the other. This hierarchical view of relations among God, humanity, and the nature has had a significant role and impact on Christian theology and ethics, which have contributed to world-negating spirituality and culture. This dualistic concept of reality as the logic of domination, which has been known to be one of the major cultural roots, causes of the world destruction.

[52] Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 177.

humans with each other, and humans with nature.[53] His panentheistic view of the divine found in the notion of *Hanulnim* represents a socioecological relationality that features particularity and universality, similarity and difference, unity and diversity in every form of relational consciousness in the complexity of life.

Su-woon found the two aspects of reality in the world, that is, *Kiyon* and *Bulyon*, in terms of their form and origin in the beginning of *Bulyon Kiyon*:

> As a song says, every existence of all things in the world possesses its own specific form. From the perspective of its external form, it is Kiyon ("it is such" as we see). From the perspective of its internal origin, it is too far and difficult to grasp it (it is Bulyon).[54]

From the above statement, the category of *Kiyon* refers to the external phenomenon of all things we can perceive, think, judge, and interpret based on human senses, feelings, and experience. Su-woon takes an example, the reality of "I." When I think about the existence of myself, I know that I was born out of my parents and my offspring will come from my existence. This belongs to *Kiyon* which we recognize from common sense. However, when I trace my origin back to the past further and further, finally to the first human, I confront difficult problems such as the origin of humanity and the universe which I cannot answer from the perspective of *Kiyon*. This is the category of

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[53] Chi-ha Kim, *Life Thought*, 170.

[54] "歌曰　而千古之萬物兮　各有成各有形　所見以論之則 其然而似然 所自以度之則 其遠而甚遠 是亦杳然之事 難測之言." "Bulyon Kiyon," Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 179-181.

Bulyon that we come to face.[55] The visible order that we can easily grasp from our experience and technical reason belongs to the world of *Kiyon*, while the invisible order we can meditate upon based on our metaphysical reason, intuition, consciousness, and spirit belongs to the world of *Bulyon*.

Kiyon is experiential and scientific reasoning about the causes of external things, while *Bulyon* is the philosophical and metaphysical pursuit of the ultimate cause. The logic of *Kiyon* is the objective methodology of empirical science, while the logic of *Bulyon* refers to the metaphysics of philosophy and religion. From the perspective of *Kiyon*, the category of *Bulyon* is the mystery, the infinite, life itself, the becoming itself we hardly grasp and realize.[56] People rely on the visible world of *Kiyon* that they can easily understand and believe, while distancing themselves from the invisible and unintelligible world of *Bulyon*. However, they cannot escape or negate the world of *Bulyon* from which their existence is derived. Su-woon further claims that the two worlds seem opposite and contradictory and yet *Bulyon* already lies in the world of *Kiyon*. *Bulyon*, the mysterious and infinite, which we do not know, does not exist far apart from us, but already exists in us and dwells with us. He explains as follows:

> Who makes the order of four seasons work? How is there water on the mountain? As even children, who are too young to speak to, know their parents, how do people know *Hanulnim*, who is the origin of life from which they come? When a saint is born to the world, the river of Hwang Hwa becomes clean once in a

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[55] Ibid., 182-183.

[56] Mun Hwan Oh, *Sarami Hanulida* (Humanity is Heaven) (Seoul: Sol, 1996), 25-30.

> thousand years. Is the destiny of the saint restored by itself? Or does the water change into clean by itself? [It is not! It is the providence of *Hanulnim*].[57]

Su-woon relates *Bulyon*, the origin, the energy or principle of Life with *Kiyon*, the concrete phenomenon and appearance of *Bulyon*. He locates Bulyon in *Kiyon*, the infinite in the finite, the mystery in the ordinary, the One in the many, and the sacred in the worldly.[58] Many ecological ethicists, though they may differ in some degree in their emphasis on the analysis of ecological problems and alternatives, hold in common their attempt to restore ecological relationality to a dynamic unity of the divine and the earthly, the infinite and the finite, transcendence and immanence, universality and particularity, and individuality and diversity.[59] For his concept of a relational consciousness in nature, Hart attempts to integrate the transcendent and the immanent. He affirms that "people who link the transcendent and the immanent in their lives experience sacramental moments."[60] *Sacramental Commons* "focuses on Earth as a place on which and in which all life in its personal and communal manifestations strives to find its place and meet its needs, while interacting in integrated ecosystems with other individuals and species."[61]

From the perspective of *Kiyon*, the mystery and infiniteness of Bulyon is unintelligible and inexpressible. It is impossible to measure the finite Oneness of *Bulyon*

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[57]"四時之有序兮 胡爲然胡爲然 山上之有水兮 其可然其可然 赤子之穉穉兮 不言知夫父母 胡無知胡無知 斯世人兮 胡無知 聖人之以生兮 河一淸千年 運自來而復歟 水自知而變歟." "Bulyon Kiyon,"Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 188-191.

[58] Oh, *Sarami Hanulida,*33.

[59] Ibid., 35.

[60] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, xxii.

[61] Ibid., xxiii.

from the perspective of *Kiyon*, that is, the dualistic way of radical separation between mind and matter, the subject and the object, the whole and the part. That is why it is called *Bulyon* ("it is not.") Here *Bulyon* is seen as opposite to *Kiyon*. Afterward, Su-woon explains the cases of intelligible *Kiyon* and further claims that *Bulyon* exists in the world of *Kiyon*. Here *Bulyon* and *Kiyon* are still seen as opposite before creative synthesis occurs in their dialectical unity. According to Su-woon, what we call *Bulyon* is how we see *Bulyon* from the perspective of *Kiyon*.[62]

In the next stage, Su-woon affirms that *Bulyon* becomes *Kiyon*. It is dynamic unity of them. How is this possible? He returns to the category of *Kiyon* after leaving *Kiyon* pointing toward *Bulyon*. At this time, it is the perspective of *Bulyon* that *Bulyon* is identified with *Kiyon*. He states the creative unity of *Bulyon* and *Kiyon* in the last part of *Bulyon Kiyon*:

> What we hardly grasp from our common sense is *Bulyon*, while what we easily grasp is *Kiyon*. When we attempt to search for the origin of the universe, it is *Bulyon* and *Bulyon* and also *Bulyon*. When we try to grasp the *Bulyon* from the providence of *Hanulnim*, it is *Kiyon* and *Kiyon* and the law of *Kiyon*.[63]

Su-woon describes the unity of *Bulyon* with *Kiyon* when he had his religious experience of the divine. For him, *Bulyon* is no longer *Bulyon*. *Bulyon* is nothing less than *Kiyon*. After his experience of *Hanulnim*, the world of *Bulyon* that he did not know does

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[62] Oh, *Sarami Hanulida*, 46-49.

[63] "是故 難必者不然 易斷者其然 比之於究其遠則 不然不然 又不然之事 付之於造物者則其然其然 又其然之理哉." "Bulyon Kiyon,"Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 192-194.

not exist anymore.[64] Every existence in the universe is *Kiyon*. Su-woon realized the interdependent nature, that is, the kinship of all things in the unity of *Bulyon* with *Kiyon*. The radical nature of unity is that all things come from the same origin of life, *Hanulnim*.

Su-woon's realization of *Muguk Daedo* (무극대도, the infinite or eternal great Way) at his spiritual experience refers to the radical unity of every form of life clearly expressed in "the unity of the divine Mind and his mind," *Osim chuk Yosim*.[65] Su-woon could not see and hear the unity of the Divine and himself through human ordinary sense. He was still in the process of differentiation.[66] He could finally hear the voice of the Divine. Su-woon and the Divine are different from the perspective of *Kiyon*. And yet, from the perspective of *Bulyon*, Su-woon realizes the Oneness with the divine. In this sense the voice that he heard is nothing more or less than the voice from his mind. The Ultimate *Ki* that Su-woon felt flowing through the universe is the Great Mind of the Universe encompassing the mind of every existent.[67] The Mind of the Divine involves not only the spiritual but also the physical state of every form of life in the Universe because it is the Great Energy from which all things are being "generated, changed, and evolved."[68] In the Great Energy there is the unity of the body and the mind, a part and the whole, humanity and the divine, humanity and the universe, and the finite and the infinite.

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[64] Ibid., 196.

[65] Ibid., 201

[66] Oh, *Sarami Hanulida*, 59.

[67] Ibid., 61.

[68] Ibid.

The unity of all things is always a dynamic unity in the Great Energy. This means that Su-woon's realization of *Bulyon*, the radical unity of every existent in the same origin (the Ultimate *Ki*), necessarily entails the realization of the differences or the diversities of all life forms as every specific phenomenon of the Ultimate *Ki*. In other words, after the realization of socioecological unity, Su-woon returns to the world of *Kiyon*, the embodied world in which each distinctive form of life is interrelated with each other in the One Great Universe.[69]

Su-woon's consciousness of *Bulyon Kiyon* is closely interlinked with his direct experience of social contradictions in his background. His mysterious spiritual experience cannot be explained apart from his attention to the suffering and misery of the lower class in social defiance in Cho-sun Dynasty. He paid attention to the particularity, especially the particular human beings who had been oppressed under the socio-political and religio-cultural structures of domination and deceit in Korean society. His return to *Kiyon*, the world of particularity, difference and diversity means his attention to and love of every particular existent in itself and for itself that is interdependent with one another in the unity of the universe.[70]

As seen above, Su-woon's understanding of *Bulyon Kiyon* is a simultaneous approach to the visible physical world and the invisible spiritual world. All forms of life rest on the relational consciousness between matter and spirit, the finite and infinite. The logic of *Bulyon Kiyon* is an expression of a dynamic unity of life. Su-woon describes an

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[69] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 199.

[70] Ibid., 195.

evolutionary view of reality though he did not explain the specific evolutionary processes in scientific terms. The interaction of *Bulyon Kiyon* in the evolutionary process is nothing less than the interaction of chance and order in natural selection.[71] The relational consciousness of *Bulyon Kiyon* leads to the ecological spirituality of *Shi Chonju* that literally means every existence serves *Hanulnim* or *Hanulnim* dwells in every existence, which is comparable with the Christian view expressed in the experience or awareness of the *sacramental commons*. The spirituality of *Shi Chonju* represents the dynamic unity of humans and the divine, humans with each other, and humans and nature. Su-woon's ecological spirituality of *Shi Chonju* can be regarded as a new way to address the socioecological and politico-cultural crisis in contemporary Korean society.

Shi Chonju* as the Essence of Ecological Ideas in *Donghak

The key phrase of *Donghak* thought lies in the main sacred formula of thirteen characters.[72] Among them *Shi Chonju* (侍天主, 시천주)[73] is the essence of the core, and it can connect to the idea of sacramental commons. *Shi* (侍) is the key concept for the whole system of *Donghak* as a philosophical, religious, and socio-political movement. Uiam, the third great leader of *Donghak*, who changed the name of *Donghak* with

[71] Ibid., 201.

[72] "侍天主造化定永世不忘萬事知." (the main incantation)

[73] *Shi Chonju* is composed of *Shi* (a predicate) which literally means "to bear" or "to serve" and *Chonju* (an object) which means the Heavenly Lord as the Catholic term for God in Korea.

Cheondogyo (天道敎)[74] as a formal term of religion, said in *Seongnyong Chulsesol* (性靈出世說, 성령출세설, doctrine of the transmigration of the Spirit) that the three meanings in which Su-woon explained *Shi* together provide the definition of *In Nae Cheon* (인내천, Humans are *Hanulnim*) that Uiam later developed as the core doctrine or thought of *Cheondogyo*. As Uiam stated, *Shi* is an organic expression of the spirituality that is the subject of all kinds of lives. The ecological significance of *Shi* demonstrates "the natural unity of humans and the cosmos," "the social unity of humans with one another," and "the revolutionary unity of humans and society."[75] In this sense, the realization of the organic nature of life in *Shi* compares to the sacramental awareness of the interactive presence and social meaning of "commons" as characterized by a sacramental community consciousness. The dissertation will present three meanings of *Shi* - (1) *Naeyou Silryong* (內有神靈, 내유신령); (2) *Oeyou Kihwa* (外有氣化, 외유기화); and (3) *Kagji Buli* (各知不移, 각지불이) - in which Su-woon elucidated the interdependent nature of all different forms of life in the unity of the Universal Life, *Hanulnim*.

Naeyou Silryong as an Ecological Spirituality

Su-woon explained the first meaning of *Shi* as *Naeyou Silryong* (內有神靈, 내유신령) which literally means "inwardly there is the divine spirit." The literal

[74] It literally means "the heavenly way."

[75] No-bin Yoon, "The Universal-Ideological Significance of Donghak," in *Donghak sasangkwa Donghak hyukmyong* (Donghak Thought and Donghak Revolution), 146.

meaning of *Shi* is to serve or heartily wait upon elders, parents, or people one respects while being with them. When we understand *Shi Chonju* as reverently serving *Hanulnim*, we recognize that the subject who serves *Hanulnim* is "I" and the object whom I serve is *Hanulnim*. There seems to be a distinction between the subject and the object. As we noted above, this can be seen as the world of *Kiyon*. The aspect of the *Bulyon* of *Shi Chonju* is also described in Su-woon's explanation of *Shi* as *Naeyou Silryong*. That is, while humans and *Hanulnim* are distinguished as the subject of serving and the object of being served, they are in union. Humans are *Hanulnim* and *Hanulnim* is humans. Mun-hwan Oh claims that this is the key to understanding the basic meaning of *Naeyou Silyong* as the unity of each form of life with the divine spirit.[76]

The Spirit in creatures can be named the Universal Spirituality, the Cosmic Life, Buddha, Truth, or whatever we call the fundamental root of life.[77] It is also named as creation consciousness that contemplates and envisions the ecological order of the cosmos in its natural cycles, relationality, and interdependence. The divine spirit is the universal nature that is not only transcendent but also immanent in all existents in the universe. Oh points out that "the universal nature is the transcendent mind over the whole creation and at the same time the immanent center moving with the universe."[78]

In this sense, *Naeyou Silyong* is an expression of ecological spirituality that the universal nature is already in the nature of every existent. It is an ecological consciousness of the unity of my mind with the universal mind. *Muguk Daedo* (無極大道,

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[76] Mun-hwan Oh, *Sarami hanulida* (Humanity is Heaven), 62-63.

[77] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyonghak*, 171.

[78] Mun-hwan Oh, 64.

무극대도) that Su-woon realized during his religious experience is the order of the universe in the cycles, interrelatedness, and diversity of the cosmic life. This is also the unity of the small cosmos, the human mind with the great cosmos, the mind of the universe. The voice of *Osim chuk Yersim* (吾心卽汝心, my mind is also your mind) that Su-woon heard from *Hanulnim* is the voice from the center of his mind at the moment of realization of the unity of his nature and universal nature. Su-woon's realization of *Osim chuk Yersim* is the restoration of his true nature, true mind, and true self. The ecological spirituality of *Naeyou Silyong* means that the nature of every existence reaches the nature of the universe, that is, *Osim chuk Yersim* through the restoration of the cosmic life.[79]

The ecological consciousness of *Naeyou Silyong* does not see the divine spirit and human mind as individual and separate but as relational and interdependent. Here interrelatedness is stressed as the basic mode of existence. The divine spirituality in the mind of the universe transcends all forms of existence, contemplates the present order of the cosmos, and envisions its future order.[80] In *Naeyou Silyong* as an inner aspect of the nature of *Hanulnim*, Su-woon emphasizes the unity of every existence with the mind of *Hanulnim* (*Silyong*) that represents the nature of the universe. The socioecological significance of *Naeyou Silyong* lies in a spiritual view of every existence in terms of its unity with *Silyong*. Most of all, the literal meaning of *Naeyou Silyong*, "inwardly there is

[79] Ibid., 66.

[80] Ibid., 69.

the divine spirit," is closely related to Hart's statement that "A sacramental consciousness is a creation-centered consciousness; it sees signs of the Creator in creation."[81]

Oeyou Kihwa as the Interrelatedness of all Creatures

Oeyou Kihwa (外有氣化, 외유기화) literally means "outwardly there is a flow of energy." While *Naeyou Silryong* focuses on the unity of each individual existence with the nature of the universe, *Oeyou Kihwa* emphasizes the interrelatedness of all things in the one energy of the universe. *Oeyou Kihwa* expresses the outer relations of *Hanulnim* to all existences in the universe, and *Naeyou Silryong* describes the inner relations of *Hanulnim* to every existence. While *Naeyou Silryong* is similar to creation consciousness and integral being[82] in sacramental commons, *Oeyou Kihwa* is closer to a dynamic relationship which creates life in the universe. *Naeyou Silryong* and *Oeyou Kihwa* are both an inner and an outer expression of the divine nature. The former focuses on the unity of all existences; the latter on their diversity. While we see the former as creation-centered consciousness and spirituality, we see the latter as the phenomenon of the universe revealed on the outside as the movement of cosmic life. In this sense, *Silryong* and *Kihwa* are just the inner and outer aspects of the one activity of *Hanulnim*. Each does not exist alone because they are interdependent with one another. They feature the unity of the divine transcendent and immanent relations to the universe. While *Silryong* is the mind of *Hanulnim* or the nature of the universe as a creation consciousness, *Kihwa* is its

[81] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, xviii.

[82] Hart's understanding of integral being is complementary to Su-woon's description of *Naeyou Silryong*. See Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 217-222.

manifestation, movement, or conduct. *Oeyou Kihwa* describes the outward disclosure of this movement working in all things of the universe.

Su-woon realized at his religious experience that, regarding *Oeyou Kihwa*, "outwardly there was the energy (*Ki*) which allowed contact with the mysterious spirit (*Silryong*)."[83] Chi-ha Kim describes the dynamic unity of the mind and energy of *Hanulnim* as "the movement of *Kihwa* of *Silryong*, or *Sinki* (the divine energy)." He sees this movement as the boundless activity of the cosmic life, i.e., revealed through all forms of work, cycles, creation, extension, repetition, unity, and convergence in the case of human history.[84] Kim explains *Ki* as the life energy clearly revealed through the life cycles of generation, disintegration, and renewal. He sees *Ki* as both an infinitesimal element in visible matter and the total invisible flow of the whole universe.[85] This allows a dynamic web of life of the universe and its movement in which all forms of life are interrelated and interdependent with each other in the universe. *Ki* is the movement and activity of the unified cosmic life that integrates mind and matter, soul and body. *Donghak*'s organic perspective of *Ki* is a socioecological alternative to the Western dualistic view of reality based on materialism and idealism.[86]

For Kim, *Oeyou Kihwa* as the creative ongoing movement of change, convergence, and extension of *Ki* implies a community of cooperation, symbiosis, and

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[83] Mun-hwan Oh, 69.

[84] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak iyaki* (The Story of Donghak), 21.

[85] Ibid., 23.

[86] Chi-ha Kim, S*aengmyonghak* (Life Thought), 58-75.

interdependence.[87] Mun-hwan Oh also understands *Oeyou Kihwa* as "original or universal community," "public unity," and "social relationality." This awakens in us the interrelatedness of all variety of things united in the one flux of *Ki*. The ongoing creative activity of one *Ki* finds expression in a myriad of diverse forms.[88]

Kagji Buli as a Praxis Ethics for Creation Consciousness

Kagji Buli (各知不移, 각지불이) is the third meaning of *Shi Chonju* and the socio-ethical implication of the first and second meanings. While *Naeyou Silryong* and *Oeyou Kihwa* focus more on ecological spirituality and consciousness, *Kagji Buli* emphasizes a socioecological praxis ethics. The literal meaning of *Kagji Buli* is that "each existence knows that one must not remove."[89] The explanation of each syllable of these words helps us to clarify the socio-ethical implications of *Kagji Buli.*

"*Kag*" indicates each specific existence conditioned by its particular circumstances in the universe. It describes each person or each being in the world that lives in specific socio-historical contexts. While *Silryong* and *Kihwa* signify the universality of *Hanulnim* as the cosmic life, *Kag* demonstrates the particularity and individuality of an embodied cosmic life. Therefore, *Hanulnim* means both the universal and the particular life in the universe. The core of *Shi Chonju* lies in the nature of Life – the universality and the particularity, the unity and the diversity, the interdependence and the individuality – and its socio-ethical implications in human relationality.

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[87] Ibid., 346.

[88] Oh, 68-74.

[89] "Nonhakmum,"Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 83-84.

The second word, "*Ji*" means to "know." Here "knowing" is not simply to grasp the order of the visible world (*Kiyon*) through common sense, or scientific and mathematical reasoning, but also to realize the order of the invisible world (*Bulyon*) through human intuition and spiritual awareness. This awareness, however, is always based on its particular context. Ecological spirituality is not separated from this world to the other world in search for disembodied truth. Rather, it is awakened knowledge of the order of *Bulyon*, the nature of life within the world of *Kiyon*. *Donghak*'s "knowing" is to realize the way of *Hanulnim*, that is, the creative process of becoming based on "practical rationality." Chi-ha Kim calls this ecological knowing "real life as knowing," that is, the unity of life and knowledge.[90] In Boff's term, this is "ecological revolution" as "an overall experience of the [inter]connectedness of all searching, of encounters, of experiences of meaning."[91] This means to grasp and appreciate the unity of each existence with *Hanulnim* (*Silryong*) and to practice the interdependent relationship of all things (*Kihwa*) in the dynamic process of unity and differentiation, integration, and disintegration of *ChiKi*.

The third word, *Bul* means "not" and the last word, *I* denotes "to remove." The combined words, *Buli* literally means "not remove," or "not to separate." When the word, *Ja* (者, 자) is added to *Buli*, the dynamics of *Buli* is emphasized. *Bulija* (不移者, 불이자) means that every existence should not be removed because of its very nature. It is one's nature that each existence should not remove oneself from the order of the

[90] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak iyaki* (The Story of Donghak), 25.

[91] Boff, *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor*, 189.

universe, that is, the source of life (*Silryong*) and its ecological relationality (*Kihwa*). Therefore, *Kagji Bulija* implies that each person knows that one should not remove oneself and others from the nature of *Hanulnim. Kagji Bulija* is not a human option but human nature. Kim describes *Kagji Buli* as "the principle of [ecological] community" and the basic principle of ecology.[92]

Kagji Buli stresses a socioecological aspect of the ethical principle of the universe in *Donghak*, while *Naeyou Silryong* and *Oeyou Kihwa* are spiritual and relational consciousness. In other words, *Kagji Buli* is a kind of ethical practice that realizes ecological spirituality in the community. The embodied socioecological ethics of *Shi Chonju*, i.e., *Kagji Buli*, obviously features ecological justice as it emphasizes the practice of *Donghak*, while creation consciousness in sacramental commons focuses on praxis ethics which proposes an "ongoing, historical, dialogic relationship between theory and practice."[93]

Ecojustice in *Shi Chonju* of *Donghak*

Ecojustice issues arise in the tension between the awareness of the necessity of a proper space for the basic living of all forms of life and limited natural goods in the usable space. All should share the finite Earth fairly to meet their basic needs. When we experience unfairness in sharing both environmental goods and burdens in our particular space for living, a justice issue emerges in our daily life. In an unjust system of social domination, clearly exemplified in racism, sexism, classism, global capitalism, militarism,

[92] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyong* (Life) (Seoul: Sol, 1992), 62.

[93] John Hart, "Cosmic Commons: Contact and Community," 386.

and neocolonialism, our ecological responsibility for the present ecological crisis, and environmental damage which we suffer as a result, become a critical social issue because neither of them can be applied to all at the same level.

Indeed, as Rosemary Ruether affirms, those who are more responsible for ecological devastation suffer less environmental impact in their privileged positions in the unjust social system.[94] On the contrary, those who are the least responsible become the most vulnerable to ecological adversity. In the global socio-economic system, a small percentage of the population in the world controls most of its natural goods. This unjust distribution of power, which leads to unequal access to natural and social goods, brings the majority of the world population, most notably the poor Third World people and people of color, and especially women and children, into ever-worse conditions of misery, and ever-more ecologically destructive relations to their habitat.[95]

The Ecojustice movement diverged from the Western white middle class environmental movement represented by resource conservation, human welfare ecology, and preservationism. This movement makes a connection between ecological problems and social issues by relating the environmental issues of protection and the disposition of toxic waste, to the social issue of power and decision-making over natural and social resources. It sees a parallel between the unequal distribution of resources and economic

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[94] Rosemary Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 88-90.

[95] Ibid.

development and the disposition of ecological wastes and hazards along the lines of race, sex, class, and nation.[96]

Ecojustice finds ecological and social problems to be interrelated with each other. Ecological issues cannot be adequately dealt with without reordering the social system of domination, such as racism, sexism, classism, and industrial capitalism based on growth without limit because ecological problems also become social issues, derived from unjust power applied over population, distribution, and use of natural goods for human needs. Moreover, ecological issues become critical social issues because of our keen sense of ecological limits and recognition of our dependence upon plants and animals, and Earth as our home.

Donghak's embodied ethic of *Shi Chonju*, which presents the unity of each particular human existence with *Hanulnim* and one's consequent equality (*Silryong*), and also one's responsibility and freedom (*Kagji Buli*) in the ecological community (*Kihwa*), considers the justice issue as central in a socioecological context. This stresses the mutuality of spiritual and physical needs in every life form, especially human beings the most self-conscious existence of *Silryong*.

Ecojustice ensures the well-being of all creation because the wellbeing of humans is inseparably interlinked with the wellbeing of Earth. Justice in the constant dynamic process of fusion and diffusion of the cosmic life, *ChiKi*, is always ecojustice because all

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[96] For example, see Robert D. Bullard, Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994); Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll ed., *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006); Jace Weaver ed., *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003); Seyyed H. Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1996).

life-forms are inseparably interdependent with each other in the unity of being and nonbeing. The ecojustice spirituality and movement in *Kagji Buli* is both spiritual realization and restoration of true self (*Silryong*), of unity with *Hanulnim* (the nature of the universe) in oneself, and the social realization and restoration of original community in the ecological community. Therefore, it leads to the interdependent nature of human relationality to the divine, other humans, and the rest of nature.

Power of Life: Cherishing God - Holding God in My Body and Heart

Despite their tortured life, the Korean minjung are usually found to believe that human life is touched by the divine-transcendental life. Su-woon is known to have preached, "If I devote all my life to cherishing the heavenly Lord (*Hanulnim*), I can transform myself and the world, and work out an infinitude of mysteries. The Lord, who oversees both the heaven and the Earth, is the power of ultimate life (*Chiki*)."[97] For Su-woon, the Lord is a personal being and a life force that is intimate and limitless. According to him, one can change the life of oneself and one's society in numerous ways by holding the divine life force in one's body and mind. In other words, one can enjoy a plentiful, prosperous life by accepting and cherishing the God within one's body. In his days people were wasted by poverty and hardship, and suffered from every kind of disease and rampant endemic. Under these circumstances, Su-woon tried to save people

[97] Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 42.

who were already withered and enervated, and to lead them to a healthy, prosperous life.[98]

Donghak started with the idea of "cherishing God" and later developed into the so-called *Donghak* revolutionary movement. To the Korean people *Hanulnim* appeared in the form of a popular God, an emancipatory God. By cherishing God, Su-woon came to experience "new creation," in which the whole universe was turned upside down. To cherish God is the beginning of the new world. Only by cherishing God could drastic changes of the outrageous status-system and the existing social conditions begin.[99]

In his view, experiences such as "God descending upon me" or "God entering me" will not only reform the world but also cure diseases and bring a healthy, better life. By cherishing God we can feel the divine life force (*shinki*, 신기) within and around us.[100] The thought that when we welcome and cherish God we will see a host of changes in our life as well as feel the divine life force, helps us prepare ourselves for the spiritual tradition of disciplining and training our soul and body for the sake of unification with God. This tradition of drilling and training one's soul and body is still very strong among Koreans.[101]

Life that cherishes God has a strong force that never fails to rise again in spite of tribulations and frustrations. Faith in *Hanulnim* encourages life. In the 1970s and 80s, when Koreans were struggling against oppression through movements for

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[98] Ibid., 46.

[99] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyong* (Life), 64.

[100] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 48.

[101] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyong* (Life), 66.

democratization, several thousand young students experienced the hardship of a prisoner's life. Surprisingly, these student prisoners came out of prison much stronger in will and determination, not broken by their life behind bars. As they went through more pains and hardships, they became even stronger. In fact, they were trained and tempered in those prison cells which were closed, stuffy, and cold. They returned to fight more strongly and fiercely for freedom and democracy.[102] I see this as a unique phenomenon subtly influenced by the faith in *Hanulnim* as well as the strong life force which Koreans hold.

Life: Event and Process of Inter-living and Communicating

In the process of Western aggression against the East, Koreans developed their own philosophy and faith on the basis of "mutual living" (相生, *sangsaeng*). Chungsan (Kang Il-Sun),[103] a distinguished religious thinker of the 19th century, opened up a new way to live in interconnection by cutting loose the old knots of *Han*.[104] He cured diseases by faith and divine power, and tried to set up a world in which people could live with and for every other, in peace, by purging all the demons and dead souls known to afflict the minjung with anger, frustration, and distress. What is remarkable about the Chungsan religion is the concept of "releasing *Han* and living in mutuality."[105] In the existing world, life is ruled by the principle of mutual conflict, thereby causing *Han* to accumulate, while

[102] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyong* (Life), 118.

[103] Ibid., 120.

[104] Ibid., 134.

[105] Ibid.

in the future world the principle is the releasing of frustrations and resentments to allow "inter-living." The Chungsan teaching thus leads people to seek life and reconciliation by forgetting about their old grudges and living in harmony, building a community of new, interrelated, and happy life.

For the purpose of mutual living, it is necessary for me to give myself to you as a source of sustenance. Mutual living and sacrifice is essential in the ecological chain of nature. We find ourselves helping each other to live while offering ourselves as sacrifice at the same time.[106] The food chain is characteristic of natural ecology: plants grow in the earth, while deer have life by eating them: a tiger preys on deer and returns to earth after their own death, thereby eventually providing food for plants.

Life may be said to be susceptible to damage because it takes place through mutual relations and interdependence. Life, being open in its essence, is very liable to injury, but for this reason it is able to be in solidarity and to become one with others. It can also grow, for the same reason. Life is a being which never fails to rise again to fight against oppression and exploitation. Through rising up and fighting, life grows and reaches the ultimate goal of sublimation and transcendence.[107]

Historically as well as socially, however, because of oppression, exploitation, and isolation, the human being is liable to suffer many injuries and pains and to be warped by grudges and enmities. According to Chungsan, life is incomplete unless it exorcises *Han*: "*Han* harbored by a single human being can be strong enough to obstruct the free flow of the cosmic force." "Even the ghost of a fly, should it be visited by *Han*, may cause the

[106] Ibid., 125.

[107] Ibid.

whole universal system to falter."[108] Where there is *Han* in people's lives, there will not come a new, inter-living world. As long as one human being turns away from the *Han* in one other human being, it will be impossible to witness the day when humankind lives in peace.

Han, however, is not limited to individual spirits. It is so intertwined with the world of minor deities - local, ethnic and cultural - that the new world can come only when they are all freed of their *Han*. All the ills and struggles in this world were born out of *Han* held by local and ethnic deities.[109] To purge this *Han* will be a short cut to world peace and harmonious government in the new heavenly paradise. By reinventing not only individual and collective spirits, but also the world of those deities who rule both consciousness and unconsciousness, we may be able to open an era of mutual living. Thus Chungsan and his followers thought that the prime element for the peace of humankind was the unifying of local deities and local destinies. Inter-living can be achieved only when *Han* held by individual spirits, history, localities, and cultures is released.

In the life of Koreans there may be found a paradoxical mixture of *Han* and *Shinmyung* (신명, vitality of life).[110] Sometimes they sing the song "Arirang" hand in hand, almost in tears. Sometimes they sing the same song with a different melody, dancing hand in hand. In the lyrics of Korean folksongs can be heard the heavy sound of pathos and pain, while Korean farmers' music (*Samulnori*, 사물놀이) radiates a

[108] Ibid., 180.

[109] Ibid., 183.

[110] Ibid.

boundless vitality.[111] It is amazing that the same music sometimes sounds so sad and hopeless, and sometimes so vital and hilarious. In the life of the Korean minjung, I believe, there is a great force capable of sublimating their deep injuries and pains into power for living. They are strong in their trust in life, which I dare say enables them to turn their pain and death the other way round to open a new heaven for mutual living.

Haewol defines femininity as "a whole being producing a new life."[112] He regards woman as a precious, sublime being. In his view, a woman pregnant with a new life is God (*Hanulnim*) pregnant with God (*Hanulnim*). According to Haewol, a woman is closer to enlightenment and will save humankind by her enlightened spiritual power.[113] This experience provides us with consolation and the power to live. It also leads to the source of life and the willingness to live. This is why Korean ancestors used to tell despairing people to make the rounds of *Won*, the town hall, which had public accommodations for sick and homeless people.[114] When we see a human being groaning in despair, we feel a new will to live resurging in ourselves. From the experience of others, we are made to feel the universal feeling of life, as well as the strong life force. All life is in communication in the cosmic bosom of God.[115] And life is stronger than death and pain. As we see God's universal communal life in Jesus on the cross, so we can feel, however vaguely, God's life in our neighbors' sufferings and death. From this it

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 214.

[113] Kim, *Saengmyonghak*, 89.

[114] Ibid., 103.

[115] Ibid, 233.

may follow for the Korean Christian that the tree of life that leads to God's community of life can be found not only in the life and crucifixion of Jesus, but also in the daily life of the minjung, always rising anew from suffering.

Ethics of Life: Serve the Person as God

An ethics of life begins with sensibility to pains and sufferings in living. The sensibility to pain suffered by others is the foundation of community-building. Kim claims that few races have suffered more and led a more *Han*-filled life than the Korean people.[116] For this reason Koreans are especially sensitive to pain. From this sensibility should begin the ethics of life. It is quite a long time since technological civilization, as a result of its pursuit of pleasure and convenience, lost its sensibility to pain suffered by people. As far as medicine is concerned, for example, the ethics of life means to take sides with those who are suffering and to judge and decide to favor them, from their perspective. It is not too much to say that human culture in the life community depends on such a capacity and wisdom that deals with the life of others as one would with one's own.

Only when we serve others as God, can we see and feel life with them, from their perspective. *Donghak* maintained that human beings held transcendental life within them. The tenet "Serve each person as God" has in common with minjung theology the fact that the latter teaches people to serve the minjung as Christ, and as God. *Donghak* further admonished, "Respect those who are now living and eating rice, as if they are *Hanulnim*

[116] Ibid., 104.

(God)." Haewol taught people not to hit their children. He said, "Hitting children is like hitting God. God doesn't like it. It could be injurious to God's own wellbeing."[117]

When we come to have the eyes and heart of Christ, we can stand in the place of the other's life. Christ saw and felt the minjung with the eyes and heart of God. God knows me better than myself because God is immeasurably great and holy, always closer to me than myself.[118] That Christ saw the minjung with the eyes and heart of God means that he saw them from their own standpoint.

When we regard those in suffering as if they are Christ, we not only can ally with them as their friends, but also "put ourselves in their shoes."[119] When we regard the disabled and deprived from their own standpoint, we can find Christ residing in each of them, and together with them rejoice in the knowledge of God's grace and life, realizing that we are of one life in Christ. We can participate in the life of reconciliation and liberation only when we, like the white man appearing in Dorothee Sölle's episode, hold the hands of an old black woman and shout, "Black is beautiful!"[120]

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[117] Ibid., 199.

[118] Ibid., 202.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Dorothee Sölle was a German feminist and theologian who speaks out against a globalization that reduces us all to one-dimensional beings — the *homo oeconomicus*. In this unitary world of production and consumption the nation-state is weakened and the "social and ecological webs" which hold us all together are dismantled. See Dorothee Sölle, *Against the Wind: Memoir of a Radical Christian*, English Translation (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 41.

Korean *Han* thought

Although the word *Han* has been used by Koreans since antiquity, *Han* thought is rather a recent term. It evolved as a result of modern scholars' effort to identify the kernel of Korean thought. Situated on the borders of China, Korea has always produced a religious and philosophical correspondence with Chinese ideas. Throughout history various religions and philosophies have found their way to this peninsula, and yet scholars have observed that there is something distinct about the way Koreans received those traditions. For example, not too long after Buddhism came to their land, Korea tailored it to suit Korean needs. Whether this was intentional or not, what is important here is that there is a consistent pattern in the way Koreans have handled foreign doctrines. What is the nature of this pattern? What is the philosophical axis of the Korean mind? Many scholars now identify it with the notion of *Han*.[121]

Han has many meanings, such as "great," "one," "totality," "the ultimate," and so on. Etymological research shows that "han" is from the cardinal number "hana (하나)," meaning "one." According to U1-ho Lee, the Dan-gun myth is the source of *Han* thought.[122] As shown in chapter three, however, there appears in the story of Dan-gun not one but three deities, Hwan-ung, Hwan-in, and Dan-gun. How can these three be the origin of one? "Han," says Lee, is more than the cardinal number "one." It is a philosophical number in which all numbers converge. Hence, "han" is also "great," or "the ultimate." As a number it is both "one" and "two." As a philosophy it is both

[121] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyonghak* (Life Thought), 133.

[122] Ul-ho Lee, "Han Sasang Ron," in *Han Sasang kwa Minjok Jonggyo* (Han Thought and National Religion) (Seoul: Ilchi-sa, 1990), 14.

monotheism and polytheism. Metaphysically, *Han* is both monism and dualism, both pantheism and anthropomorphism. Whereas the Lao Tzu ascribes the ultimate meaning of the Dao to nature and accepts things as they are, *Han* ascribes shin, "god," or "spirit" to myriad things. This partly explains why Korean traditional religion became thoroughly animistic. It also partly explains why in Korea there has been such a consistent effort to find a unity in all the different religions that came there.[123] This tendency, say some scholars, like Lee, is characteristic of Korean thought.

Comparative Constructs: Jürgen Moltmann and *Donghak*

Moltmann's Spirit of Life

Jürgen Moltmann identifies himself as a panentheist theologian and argues that the Spirit of God is present in all things. He conceives of the Holy Spirit as "the power and life of the whole creation," and further explores her in the perichoretic relation between God and the world as *shekinah*,[124] God's indwelling. He sees the "world of nature as bearing the prints of the Triune God and as being the real promise of the coming kingdom."[125] In his work on the Holy Spirit, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, he devotes his full attention to developing a doctrine of the Holy Spirit

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[123] Similar attempts which became established religions are *Donghak*, Chungsan Gyo, Dae-Jong Gyo, and Won-Bul Gyo, each of which seeks to find a unity among diverse religions in Korean context.

[124] It is the English spelling of a grammatically feminine Hebrew name of God in Judaism. The original word means "the dwelling" or "settling," and denotes the dwelling or settling of the divine presence of God.

[125] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 71.

within a trinitarian framework.[126] He provides a creative interpretation of pneumatology which emphasizes the fact that the experience of the Spirit cannot be restricted to the Christian church but must be extended to the whole community of creation. His major effort in this book is to promote a holistic pneumatology in which the traditional dichotomy between Spirit and body is replaced by an understanding of the relation between the Spirit and life. For him, the source of the variety of life originates in the restless power of Yahweh's *ruah* and his/her indwelling *shekinah* which is actualized further in Jesus' experience of Spirit and the church's experience of the risen Jesus Christ through the Spirit.[127]

Moltmann's concern with a holistic pneumatology begins by rejecting the limitation of dialectical theology, which merely stresses the divine Word and dismisses the human consciousness. For him, however, human experience can be considered as one of the sources for acquiring the knowledge of God the Spirit, as he attempts to reconsider the contribution of the nineteenth-century liberal and pietistic theology led by Friedrich Schleiermacher.[128] Moltmann criticizes the exclusive claim that the Holy Spirit remains entirely on God's side, so that it can never be experienced by human beings. God as the wholly other[129] is far removed from human life and experience and merely resides in a timeless eternity all by himself.

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 180.

[128] Ibid., 107.

[129] The term "wholly other" is used in Christian theology to describe the difference between God and everything else. God, the Christian God, is completely different than all other

Moltmann's trinitarian understanding of God locates the Spirit in the interrelational fellowship, koinonia. In this respect, the inner being of the Holy Spirit refers to relational sociality. He calls the Spirit *Spiritus Congregator*, which functions as conferring the fellowship of the community.[130] He explains,

> In the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the triune God himself is an open, inviting fellowship in which the whole creation finds room: "That they also may be in us," prays the Johannine Christ (John 17:21). The fellowship of the Holy Spirit "with you all" (II Cor. 13:13) corresponds to his fellowship with the Father and the Son.[131]

For Moltmann, the Spirit of life is always identical with the Spirit of koinonia, *Spiritus Congregator*, which is perceived not only as a special gift of the Spirit but also as her essential nature and character. Just as the fellowship means a reciprocal relationship that involves opening oneself to the other and moving into mutual participation and recognition, the Spirit as koinonia plays a significant role in creating the fellowship and sustaining it with the Father and the Son.[132] In this sense, the major role of Spirit is to relate the Father and the Son in order to make a trinitarian community or fellowship, and to bring that community into the fellowship of the entire universe that is the origin and the ultimate purpose of all creation. In other words, the Spirit works by

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things that exist. God can be described by essential properties such as holiness, immutability, etc. But we have to ask how we, as finite creatures, can relate to the infinite God. It is difficult when God is "wholly other" than we are. It means that we must relate to God by his/her self-revelation in the person of Christ Jesus, and through the Bible.

[130] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 216.

[131] Ibid., 217.

[132] Ibid.

joining disparate living entities into koinonia and replicates the social experience of the Triune God throughout the world.[133]

The trinitarian pneumatology, which stresses the interrelatedness of the bodily, political, and ecological dimensions of the Christian experience of the Spirit, has some significant ethical implications in terms of the social and communal relations in the world. The universal activity of the Spirit does not shy away from issues of domination and discrimination, but embraces the reality of human and ecological suffering working as a relational and liberating power.[134] He is certainly aware of the God-negating destructive power of racial, sexual, and cultural subjugation, political tyranny, economic oppression, the destruction of human rights, and ecological crisis.[135] The Spirit suffers with suffering people and nature, and thus the experience of suffering is part of life in the Spirit. In this context, Moltmann explores the experiences of a wide range of liberation movements, suffering people and ecology.[136]

In connection with the issue of human and ecological liberation, Moltmann's panentheistic vision of the Spirit is further emphasized. In that pneumatology that portrays the Spirit as the immanent transcendence, the two characterizations of the relation of God to the world are not contradictory.[137] One is the experience of God in all things; the other is the experience of all things in God. The former goes over against a

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[133] Ibid., 229.

[134] This notion resembles *Shi Chonju* of *Donghak*.

[135] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 288.

[136] Ibid., 289.

[137] Ibid., 211.

theological transcendentalism, which presupposes the assumption that everything comes from the revelation of God's otherness. The transcendence, in the words of Moltmann, is immanent in all things in the world, and can be inductively discovered.[138] He explains this perspective as "infinite in the finite, the eternal in the temporal, and the enduring in the transitory."[139] For him, identifying nature with God or presenting God's presence in nature already indicates the idea of God's immanent transcendence.

The latter which is the experience of all things in God shows us the transcendent immanence. This means moving from "the all-embracing horizon of the world and perception to the individual things which appear against this background,"[140] a process which invites us to perceive "the finite in the infinite, the temporal in the eternal, and the evanescent in what endures."[141] Human experience of the world blends with the experience of God, and reverence for life becomes part of the adoration of God. In this context of thought, human beings enter lovingly into relationships with God, and therefore God can in no way be described as an "unmoved mover."[142] Rather, God is deeply aware of human feelings and has knowledge of human and ecological suffering.

Moltmann proposes his vision of panentheism as follows:

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[138] Ibid., 248.

[139] Ibid., 249.

[140] Ibid.

[141] Ibid., 268.

[142] Ibid., 260.

> The *ruah* is certainly present only when and where God wills it to be so; but with his will towards creation it is also present in everything, and keeps all things in being and in life. When we think about the *ruah* we have to say that God is in all things, and all things are in God–though this does not mean making God the same as everything else.[143]

In Moltmann's panentheism, the Spirit is the divine breath of life that fills everything with its own life, and which bridges the difference between creator and creature. The one God who created the world through His/Her life-giving breath always enters into the continual communication and relationship between God and the world. In this way, he differentiates the way in which the world dwells in God from that in which God dwells in the world. He clearly differentiates his panentheism from pantheism, in which all distinctions between transcendence and immanence are dissolved.[144]

Based on the argument of Moltmann's panentheist perception of the Holy Spirit, his pneumatology can be characterized with four major points. First, the Holy Spirit is the "life-giving Spirit."[145] Moltmann affirms that the Hebrew word *ruah* and the Greek word *pneuma* can be interpreted as the life-giving Spirit, which is conceived as the creative and life-sustaining power existing in each creature as the breath of life. As some biblical references suggest, both *ruah* and *pneuma* are part of the vital force that grants vitality to creation.[146] The source of all life is God. Although God shares her life with

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[143] Ibid., 211.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 228.

[146] Ibid.

the creaturely life, a profound awareness of the distinction between God as the source of life and human beings as the recipients of life is clearly observed.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the "beyond and yet within" Spirit in terms of the ontological sense. Moltmann portrays the Holy Spirit with the paradoxical expression of "immanent transcendence and transcendent immanence."[147] He claims that the two characterizations of the Spirit are not contradictory with the panentheistic interpretation of God. One is the experience of God in all things; the other is the experience of all things in God. The former challenges a theological transcendentalism which assumes that everything comes from God's otherness. The transcendence, for Moltmann, is immanent in all things in the world, and can be inductively discovered.[148] The latter, the experience of all things in God, leads us to speak of transcendent immanence of the Holy Spirit. Human beings enter lovingly into relationships with God.

Third, the Holy Spirit is in the trinitarian structure in the sense of the cosmology. Moltmann locates the Spirit in the interrelational fellowship, koinonia.[149] The inner being of the Holy Spirit refers to the relational sociality. The major role of the Holy Spirit is to relate the Father and the Son in order to make a trinitarian community, and to bring that community into the fellowship of the entire universe that is the origin and the ultimate purpose of all creation.

Fourth, the Holy Spirit is the eschatological Spirit of God. Moltmann emphasizes that the Spirit is the transcendent eschatologically and christologically-determined source

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[147] Ibid., 229.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ibid., 217.

for the ultimate revitalization of creation.[150] These trinitarian and eschatological concepts of God as dwelling among God's people, in God's Christ and through God's life-giving Spirit is the central foundation of his panentheistic interpretation of God as the Spirit, and this notion is comparable to *Donghak*'s idea of *Ki* and *Shi Chonju*.

Su-woon's *Ki* in *Donghak* Tradition

Su-woon presents a Korean panentheistic philosophy of *Ki* in *Donghak* tradition. The distinctive characteristic of the *Ki* is the syncretic combination of the pantheistic feature of Daoist, Confucian traditions, and of the Korean indigenous *Hanulnim* faith. In this sense, the *Ki* is the totality in which transcendent personal God and immanent natural *ki* are interfused. The *K*i not only designates the origin of all forms of life of the universe, but embraces the union of spirit and matter in the life of the universe. Kim claims that the ontological form of the *Ki* is one totality in which spirit and matter are interrelated "as part of harmony, complementarity, and completeness."[151]

Su-woon defines the *Ki* (氣) as "one *Ki* of the primordial chaos (混原 之一氣, 혼원지일기)."[152] Here, the idea of chaos indicates an undifferentiated state of the *Ki* of heaven and earth, which constitute the myriad creatures. The notion of one means totality of the *Ki*. The *Ki* as the basic and primordial life participates in all the affairs of the universe and exists spontaneously without a beginning or an end in its true essence.

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[150] Ibid., 292.

[151] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 177.

[152] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 224.

Su-woon's *Ki* is perceived as the basic idea of the supreme spirit-matter, which is the ultimate cause of the complexity of the present -- the evolutionary force through which all things are manifested.[153] According to *Donghak* thought, the evolution of nature is dependent on the movement of the *Ki*. The world is also the self-evolutionary or spontaneous manifestation of the *Ki*. Su-woon's explanation of the *Ki* is as follows:

> The Ultimate *Ki* (支氣, 지기) being here and now,
> I yearn for its great descent.
> Waiting on God, I have naturally become.
> Eternally not forgetting, I become aware of all.[154]

The *Ki* is both from within and from without, which is pervasive in the universe, in all the myriad creatures. Consequently, the *Ki* becomes a term equivalent to Su-woon's perception of God, *Hanulnim*. This denotes "the evolutionary manifestation of itself within the phenomenon of the world."[155] The *Ki* also explains the principle and power, which comes from the total and original entity from which all things have come into being.

Bong-ik Choi, a scholar of *Donghak*, contends that the Ultimate *Ki* is "a root of the world and mother and life of the Universe. All things in the world come from the ultimate *Ki* and go back to it."[156] The *Ki* is not only the ultimate energy of the universe,

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[153] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 193.

[154] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 87.

[155] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 195.

[156] Bong-ik Choi, *Introduction of Korean Philosophy* (Seoul: Hanmadang, 1989), 87.

but also the very substance of the phenomenal world.[157] In other words, the *Ki* as energy moves and forms all phenomena in the world. What makes then the *Ki* occur? How does the *Ki* work or operate in the world? For the discussion of the causality of the *Ki*, two paradoxical notions, *Bulyon Kiyon* (不然基然) and *Muwi Ihwa* (無爲以化), need to be mentioned.

First, as I mentioned above, the literal meaning of *Bulyon Kiyon* is that "it is not and it is" or "it is a suchness and not a suchness," namely, "it is like that because it is thus and not thus." In other words, "there are beings or things that are as they are," that is a kind of principle for not naming and reasoning. Su-woon says, "Since remote antiquity, all myriad creatures found each other in their own way."[158] It is true today that he refuses to speculate on the nature of causality by saying "although the way things are shown may inform us of their being such and such, as far as their origin is concerned, it is difficult to say one way or another."[159] For him, the problem of causality is simply mysterious and unknowable.

In contrast to the primary cause of Western classical thinking, Su-woon's *Ki* is not a determinate cause of beings. The world is produced without a preliminary plan or intention. The existence of the pure divine realm, which is consistently found in Christian tradition, is absent in this idea of suchness. Accordingly, the ontological and epistemological question - Why did God feel it necessary to create the world? - with

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[157] Ibid., 89.

[158] "而千古之萬物兮 各有成各有形." Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 191.

[159] "所見以論之則 其然而似然 所自以度之則 其遠而甚遠." Ibid.

which Christianity has struggled, is simply not raised. According to the notion of *Bulyon Kiyon*, the *Ki* is causeless and beginningless, operating in a spontaneous movement of cosmic energy, referring to the state in which things and beings unfold and develop or process of their own accord.[160]

Second, the cosmic existence of the *Ki* emerges with the principle of *Muwi Ihwa* which commonly means "working through non-action" or "letting things develop by themselves."[161] This does not indicate "quietism" in a passive manner, but designates a paradoxical way of actualizing or realizing the spontaneous movement of the *Ki*. The concept of *Muwi Ihwa*, which can be said to be "an expression for the ultimate," in fact, has little to do with "total inaction" or "doing nothing," but intimates the workings of the ultimate reality.[162] The nature of this concept is, in this sense, "unpremeditated, nondeliberative, noncalulating, nonpurposive action."[163] The spontaneity of the *Ki* is a prime characteristic and is considered another way of expressing the normative ideal for how things and beings are to exist and progress.

Philosophically speaking, the idea of non-action or spontaneity is used to describe the ineffable phenomena of nature and to convey that nothing further can be explained.[164] The spontaneous cosmic order offers an ontological basis of self-manifestation of the *Ki* in the process of harmony. In accordance with this principle, God or *Hanulnim* in the

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[160] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 211.

[161] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 181.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 212.

[164] Ibid., 226.

work of the *Ki* is portrayed as *Kihwa Chisin* (氣化之神, 기화지신) or *Kihwa Silryong* (氣化神靈, 기화신령)[165] who is the movement of constant change and transformation.[166] In the philosophy of the *Ki*, no clear distinction has been made between the concept of God and the *Ki*. In fact, they are quite interchangeable. God exists with a continued interaction of the *Ki* in which all forms of the myriad of creatures are germinated and generated.[167]

The ontological structure of the *Ki* can be further examined with Su-woon's doctrinal teaching of *Shi Chonju* (侍天主). From the perspective of *Ki*, *Shi* includes the meaning of both being filled with the *Ki* inside and feeling the harmony of the *Ki* outside. Su-woon explains the meaning of *Shi*, into three dimensions.

First, *Shi* is "one's having the spirit within."[168] According to Pack Se-myung, the total life of the universe has gradually become individuated and complex, having reached its most highly developed stage in the human world after passing through the plant and animal stages. In this respect, he argues that humans have the most highly developed intellectual capacity "to have the spirit within" among all beings.[169]

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[165] Both have a similar meaning that "people have a proper *Ki* to inspire themselves and bear *Hanulnim* or Spirit within."

[166] Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 79-81.

[167] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 241.

[168] *Nae-you-sil-ryong* (內有神靈).

[169] Se-myong Pack, *Donghak Thought and Chondokyo* (Seoul: Donghaksa, 1956), 8.

Second, *Shi* is also "one's having energy outside,"[170] which means that humans are an individuated form of life and that *Ki* is the total life. In other words, a relationship of totality and individuality exists between *Ki* and humans respectively. In this relationship, a dualistic separation cannot be maintained. Since a human's relationship with the *Ki* is like that of a part to the whole, it is necessary for humans to be dependent and to wait on the *Ki*. Also, this means that although other plants and animals possess the *Ki* since human beings represent the most highly developed stage of life in the world, humans have the image closest to the divine.[171]

Third, *Shi* indicates that "all the people of the world know and cannot be transferred,"[172] which means that when humans realize the new principle of *Dao*, they practice it without unnatural action or movement. Once humans are aware of the truth of *Dao*, they just act and live naturally and quietly in accordance with the truth. At this stage, there can be true progress based on authentic knowledge. Therefore, this phrase has the futuristic meaning of waiting on the Ultimate *Ki* with new knowledge and having made genuine progress. With this understanding of *Shi*, these three magic characters can be broadly defined as words for "waiting on the Ultimate *Ki* faithfully."[173]

Another possible type of interpretation of *Shi Chonju* is found in *Yongdam Yusa* (龍潭遺詞, Song of Yongdam):

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[170] *Oe-you-ki-hwa* (外有氣化).

[171] Pack, 19.

[172] *Il-sae-ji-in Kag-ji-bul-I* (一世之人 各知不移).

[173] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 216.

> What fortune befell you that you desire a free ride?
> Are you foolish enough to depend on me?
> Do not count on me but trust in God alone.
> While God is within you [literally, "your body"]
> Would you still look far and away?[174]

In this poetic scripture, Su-woon urges his children and relatives to wait on the ultimate *Ki* which exists within them. Su-woon also admonishes them not to be lazy as they search for enlightenment. In this connection, what is entailed is that "all human beings are able to wait on the *Ki*."[175] In this understanding of *Shi Chonju*, then, we see a balanced tension between the transcendent and the immanent aspects of the *Ki*. One the one hand, the ultimate *Ki* is one to be served, on the other, the presence of the *Ki* within all human beings is so pervasive that it can be defined completely neither as an objective reality nor as "I and Thou" relationship. More accurately, the *Ki* is both transcendentally and immanently identified with us. Therefore, as Pack explains, *Shi* here means a holistic vision of reality and indicates a "radical union" between divine and human beings, which includes the "social union" among human beings; the "revolutionary union" between individuals and society; and the "ecological union" between human beings and the universe.[176]

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[174] "운수(運數)야 좋거니와 닦아야 도덕(道德)이라 너희라 무슨팔자 불로자득(不勞自得) 되단말가 해음없는 이것들아 날로믿고 그러하냐 나는도시 믿지말고 한울님을 믿었어라 네몸에 모셨으니 사근취원(捨近取遠) 하단말가." "Kyohunga (Song of Lesson) in Yongdamyousa," *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 288-290.

[175] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 203.

[176] Pack, 69.

Outcomes of the Dialogue between Moltmann and *Donghak*

A comparative study between Moltmann's pneumatological understanding of life and *Donghak*'s interpretation of the ultimate *Ki* paves a way for the common socioecological vision. The Spirit of life in Moltmann's panentheism and his expression of "immanent transcendence and transcendent immanence" are complementary to the cosmic existence of the *Ki* expressed in *Muwi Ihwa* and the ultimate *Ki*'s balanced tension disclosed in *Shi Chonju*.

First, the dialogue begins with the question of Moltmann's causality of the Holy Spirit and the *Ki*: where do the Spirit and the *Ki* come from? Moltmann uses the biblical concepts of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with that which causes the wind, breath, and life. They are deeply rooted in the idea of self-transcending source as they are connected with that which brings and sustains life. Here, the idea of self-transcendence means that something new comes out of precedent, but we cannot explain it by its precedents. It can be said that the *Ki* has also an external source while maintaining the inner dynamic of the self-organizing nature.[177] However, the subtle difference between the two is that, whereas Moltmann emphatically proposes a radical immanence of the Spirit without compromising or reducing God's transcendence, Su-woon emphasizes the nature of self-creation of the *Ki* without an external-transcendent animator or impulse. As observed in Su-woon's mystical experience, the external force is none other than that internal transformation.

Second, this dialogue presents a different notion of the oneness of the Holy Spirit and the *Ki*. Moltmann's panentheistic construction is in part derived from the neo-

[177] Ibid., 101.

Platonic idea of One and its emanation.[178] God is the One who is beyond all distinction and cannot even distinguish herself from herself as the One who becomes beyond self-consciousness. Interestingly, Moltmann goes against a reductionist position of the monistic thinking which erodes the absoluteness of God and the distinction of good and evil when everything is treated as one.[179] He rather holds the language and the idea of a transcendent God in rejecting the notion that God becomes in any way less through the process of emanation. It is quite true for him to say that the world proceeds from God by divine necessity, and God the prior One retains "its own place" always transcending the subordinate being.[180]

The cosmology of the *Ki* is not based on the idea of creation but the notion of harmony, which suggests that creation is possible without a totally transcendent creator, and mystical union is possible without an absolute reality to unite with. In Su-woon's religious experience of the *Ki*, he falls into the ecstasy in which the boundary between the divine and human realm becomes blurred.[181] The enlightening state of Su-woon is a key concept for entering into harmony with the Ultimate reality which results in the transformation of self. This is not the denial of the transcendent existence of the divine but a different way of understanding the relation between the divine and the human world. Su-woon is, of course, aware of the difference between the two worlds but not in an

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[178] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 212.

[179] Ibid., 217.

[180] Ibid., 238.

[181] Pack, 104.

ontological sense. The state of harmony of the *Ki* emphasizes the notion of the transformation of self through the process of changing or becoming God.[182]

Third, a distinctive ontological structure of inter-relationship can also be observed. In Moltmann's panentheism, the Holy Spirit has been always held the position of the Third person of the Trinity, which relates not only the Father to the Son, but also to the entire creation in its relational fellowship. This is the trinitarian doctrine of perichoresis, Moltmann indicates, which holds a relational and social character of each member of the trinity and is a function of the mutuality of the three persons.[183]

In the idea of the *Ki*, the number three or the trinitarian formula does not occupy as a central issue because the idea of the *Ki* is predominantly conceived as the undifferentiated one *Ki* or the *Ki* of the chaos, which fills the Heaven, Earth, and the human beings.[184] The idea of one *Ki* has paid particular attention to the relationship between the one and many. As a basic dynamic, the one *Ki* existed prior to the world and everything that exists is only an aspect of it in a lesser or greater state of condensation and dispersion.[185] Condensed, life is germinated, dispersed, it remains indefinite potential. The one *Ki* is here not a numeric sense but indicates the totality of the reality, which

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[182] Ibid., 176.

[183] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 93.

[184] Pack, 174.

[185] Ibid.

consequently includes multiple forms of life. Don-hwa Lee points out that this is not a reduction of a multiplicity of the *Ki*, but a production of a multiplicity out of a unity.[186]

Fourth, the concept of time works in a different way. Moltmann's pneumatology works in an eschatological manner, which involves the future consummation of the Kingdom of God.[187] The category of time is related to the unity of the immanent Trinity in drawing the anticipation of the coming kingdom of God, which is the essential element of hope in Christian gospel. For him, a real theological eschatology can only be achieved through the Spirit of Christ and the Christ of the Spirit who is a genuine future and hope in God.[188] This eschatological Spirit of God is based on the linear and teleological convergence in Western culture.

If the Holy Spirit is eschatological, the *Ki* operates in a cyclical way without a teleological concept. In the philosophy of the *Ki*, all forms of life are circular: they begin and turn without end. The idea of beginning and ending is related together in the work of the ultimate *Ki*. The constant and continuous movement of the *Ki* ensures the cosmic rhythm and order which in turn gives rise to the transformation of *yin* and *yang* through the inner process of renewing and recreating.[189] There is no need for the development of a linear concept of time, which identifies a single beginning from which all things process. The process of existence of the *Ki* is fundamentally cyclical in which no final beginning or end is required to sustain the concept.

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[186] Don-hwa Lee, *The Philosophy of the Divine Human Being* (Seoul: Iilsinsa, 1963), 11.

[187] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 227.

[188] Ibid., 229.

[189] Pack, 119.

In the previous dialogue, I have seen that the Holy Spirit and the ultimate *Ki* find their common ground in the idea of panentheism, and yet each has been distinctively developed with its own cultural and philosophical framework. Moltmann's panentheistic pneumatology stresses on the fact that the world is ontologically created by a transcendent creator who makes herself creator in the act of creating, whereas Su-woon's panentheistic pneumatology proposes the world is created by decisions within its own creating process.[190] In the framework of Moltmann, the distinction between ontological and cosmological unity is clearly maintained. The Holy Spirit is cosmologically creative in its own right and yet the product of ontological creation. In other words, the work and the presence of the Holy Spirit would be self-creative in a cosmological sense, but would be wholly dependent in an ontological sense.[191] From the perspective of comparative ethics, the recognition of an ontological creator is the uncompromising condition in Moltmann's panentheistic pneumatology, while for Su-woon, the distinction between ontology and cosmology is not so significant in terms of the monistic and yet multiple nature of the ultimate *Ki*. In this sense, the relation between God and the world is still asymmetrical in causality in Moltmann's pneumatology, whereas the cosmo-ontological principle of spontaneity of the *Ki* entails a symmetrical relation on which the distinction between God and the world is dissolved in the fullness of life.[192]

Despite the different cultural and philosophical contexts, both the Holy Spirit and the ultimate *Ki* suggest the comprehensive life principle as a socioecological vision that

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[190] Ibid., 121.

[191] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 202.

[192] Pack, 188.

animates all forms of life and integrates both physical and spiritual dimensions. This common theme of vitality is particularly important and relevant to today's life-destroying world, marked by the massive poverty of the Third world, ecocide, and other "isms' oppressions" (racism, sexism, classism, and so on).[193] The organic and relational consciousness of the life-giving Spirit becomes a corrective to the dualistic worldview and suggests an integration of the reality. This provides the context for an agenda of holistic liberation including the transformation of every dimension of life in its socioecological aspects.

Creation Consciousness as a Common Socioecological Vision

Showing fundamental human vulnerabilities to creation, ecojustice points to a theological strategy that narrates grace within an embodied human intimacy with creation. By pointing to disembodiments of the self from social community and from the Earth, ecojustice summons reembodiments of self, Earth, and God.[194] The response, says Karen Baker-Fletcher, means "to become part of the body of God," redemptively re-embodying an interrelational human self through creative political actions that "participate in God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth,"[195] which is similar to the notion of *Donghak*'s *Huchon Gaebyeok* (後天開闢).

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[193] Pack, 213.

[194] Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Spirit, Sisters of Dust: Womanist Wordings on God and Creation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998), 8.

[195] Ibid., 57.

If we do not move beyond strategies that treat humanity and nature separately, says George Tinker, "we have not yet begun to deal with ecojustice, let alone ethno-ecojustice and racism, as a systemic whole, as a system of oppression rooted in structures of power that touch every part of our lives."[196] The ecojustice movement traces ecological disruptions of human dignity and contrasts them with nondualist, nonindividualist, ecologically-relational concepts of human personhood.[197] "The yoking of civil and environmental rights is crucial to ontological wholeness," writes Emilie Townes, because they counter serially related lynching with a spirituality of socioecological wholeness.[198]

Ecojustice does not, therefore, produce an anthropocentric version of the strategy; rather, its human concern serves a different pastoral strategy altogether, in which the structure of human personhood illuminates ecological problems and guides Christian responses to them. By theologically qualifying that association, ecojustice advocates treat creation's integrity and human dignity as essentially related moral concerns and noncompetitive moral interests.[199] That practical strategy discloses similarities to creation consciousness in *Donghak* and sacramental commons, which otherwise might seem socially and ideologically distant.

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[196]George Tinker, "Ecojustice and Justice: An American Indian Perspective." In Dieter Hessel, *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide, Ecology and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 180.

[197] Ibid., 183.

[198] Emilie Townes, *In a Blaze of Glory: Womanist Spirituality as Social Witness* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995), 60.

[199] Ibid., 72.

Creation Spirituality and Consciousness

Creation spirituality sometimes presents itself as a "liberation theology for the so-called 'First-World' peoples."[200] Reconceptualizing subjectivity and spirituality within a cosmic story, creation spirituality reclaims nature for alienated human individuals. Humans discover their earthly place by first rediscovering their own inward cosmic consciousness and inner mysteries of the cosmos itself. Hence Thomas Berry said that "we bear the universe in our beings as the universe bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deeper mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged."[201] This notion is exactly comparable with *Donghak*'s idea of *Shi-Chonju* which means "bearing God within" and *Osim chuk Yosim* which means "my mind is just your mind." Moreover, it links to Hart's concept that "a creation-centered consciousness is a holistic understanding that the Creator, abiotic creation, and the biotic community are interrelated."[202]

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[200] Matthew Fox, *Creation Spirituality*, xi. Ecofeminist connections of ecojustice and spirituality also support Fox's claim, and further attest to their shared strategy. The connections are evident in Karen Baker-Fletcher, *Sisters of Spirit*, *Sisters of Dust*. Recently, Sarah McFarland Taylor has made them richly clear in her description of the legacies of Thomas Berry and feminist thought in the emergence of environmentally activist Catholic religious women; *Green Sisters*, esp. 23–43. See chapter 12 for further comment on the significance of ecofeminist and womanist thought for ecological ethics. Leonard Boff, by contrast, pursues a creation spirituality approach from the conventional liberation theology commitment to think from the cry of the "third-world" oppressed, thus implying that creation spirituality commitments may address alienations shared beyond privilege and power. See Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*; and *Ecology and Liberation*, especially 104–14. Compare with an ecofeminist theology also from Brazil; Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*.

[201] Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, 130.

[202] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 17.

Creation consciousness, therefore, refuses to begin from nature or human practice in prior isolation, and instead addresses their alienation within human personhood as the root of ecological problems. The common creation story and the story of Jesus reveal the same sacred thing: human persons are a living cosmology, active manifestations of the world's communion. "In creation spirituality God has been speaking the truth since the beginning of time. . . . We're just the lucky ones who have come along now in a moment of time to bring it to consciousness, to give a word to it: Jesus."[203] Discovering in the cosmic Christ "the interconnectivity of all things and . . . the power of the human mind and spirit to experience personally this common glue," humans find themselves at once cast in solidarity with all things and uniquely empowered to creatively realize that relationality.[204]

Donghak also stresses the "organic interdependence" of body, which is far from reductionist and mechanistic ideas.[205] The realization of the importance of the organic body makes possible the creative spiritual understanding of *Shi Chonju*. Sometimes, religious teachings advise followers either to abandon fellow human beings for the sake of God, or to kill them in the name of God. Such extreme teachings arise from the lack of the conscious understanding of the interdependence between human beings and God. This falsehood never occurs in *Donghak* because of its concept of body. Moreover, the concept of the interdependence of body develops to the consciousness of the suffering of

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[203] Richard Rohr, "Christianity and the Creation," In Albert LaChance and John E. Carrol, eds., *Embracing Earth* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 153.

[204] Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, 133.

[205] Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 216.

other lives and so affirms human dignity, social ethics, and ecojustice, as well as reverence for the Cosmos.

Developing Su-woon's *Shi Chonju* concept, Haewol introduced the idea of "Three Respects": respect for God, respect for Nature, and respect for Humanity.[206] In this thought, we can see a definite expansion from the God-human relation to the God-Nature-human relationship. Haewol developed the concept of *Shi Chonju* and expanded it to the cosmo-socioecological dimension. The result of this development, inherited in Uiam's *In-Nae-Chon* (人乃天, "Human is *Hanulnim*"), is clearly revealed in *Donghak*'s creation spirituality and consciousness.

The concept of *In-Nae-Chon* implies trinitarian spirituality: egalitarian humanism, socioecological consciousness, and religious faith in God. These three support one another.[207] That is, egalitarian humanism never deteriorated into anthropocentrism because of socioecological consciousness. We have observed such deterioration in the past in Western traditions, whether they are theistic or atheistic. Although religious faith in God assures human egalitarianism, it often fails to expand its justice to nature. The contemporary ecological crisis is the evidence of this failing. The modern atheistic tradition also celebrates humanitarianism. However, its sense of socioecological consciousness is scarce. In *Donghak* spirituality, humanitarian justice does not exclude ecojustice since its understanding suggests the organic interrelatedness between human beings and the world. This comprehensive spirituality is possible because of its panentheistic perspective, which is a major difference from some Eastern religious

[206] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyonghak*, 221.

[207] Ibid., 157.

thoughts.[208] In fact, the concept of *Donghak* supposes that theism buttresses ethics. The trinitarian spirituality is of great value and applicability to socioecological ethics in Korean contexts.

Donghak's spirituality is supported not only by its philosophical teachings but also by its quest for religious discipline. *Donghak* regards human beings as respectful beings; however, the respectful state is not warranted in itself. *Su-sim-jung-ki* (修心正氣, 수심정기), meaning "keeping mind and having right energy," is essentially encouraged. Su-woon stresses religious discipline at various points in his writings. The idea of *Shi Chonju* (bearing God) is not merely a philosophical explanation but implies a spiritual training: "*Sung* (誠, 성, sincerity), *Kyung* (敬, 경, respect), and *Shin* (信, 신, faith)."[209] Su-woon borrows the Confucian virtues (sincerity and respect) and completes them by adding his own religious experience.

For Su-woon, the virtues of sincerity and respect derive from Confucianism; however, they do not refer to goodness achieved by ethical self-realization. Rather, they are based on "faith in God." Like the trinitarian spirituality, the three virtues are interdependent, and yet faith plays a dominant role. Starting from Su-woon's creative religious experience, *Donghak* expanded to provide a solid socio-ethical background to promote an ecological spirituality.[210] *Donghak* presents both a respectable spiritual idea very viable in the current socioecological debates and a balanced consciousness useful in

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[208] Ibid., 159.

[209] Suk-san Yun, *Annotations of Donghak Scripture*, 321-323.

[210] Chi-ha Kim, *Saengmyonghak*, 226.

the formation of an ethic to overcome the contemporary ecological crisis. Its consciousness and spirituality are essentially joined so that it succeeds in offering the potential to build a common moral vision in Korean contexts.

Sacramental Commons and Consciousness

Hart points out that "people with a creation-centered consciousness understand well that they live in a sacramental universe and that Earth is a sacramental commons."[211] He draws on the theological resources of sacrament to elaborate conditions for creation's integrity by fitting his Christian ecological ethics into an ecojustice strategy. Hart suggests the *creatiocentric* consciousness as a new human perspective that includes "cosmocentric, theocentric, geocentric, and biocentric" all together[212] "These perspectives are bound together at the core of cosmic being. 'Creation' implies Creator and creatures, and to be *creatiocentric* is to recognize their interrelationship."[213] As mentioned above, in *Donghak* thought this kind of relational consciousness is emphasized to build a sense of kinship and relatedness with all life. Therefore, creation consciousness can play a major role to bridge *Donghak* and sacramental commons as a common socioecological vision and become an expected future location of Korean socioecological ethics.

In fruitful ways, then, understandings from creation spirituality, sacramental commons consciousness, and *Donghak* teachings can be interrelated and share a common

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[211] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 17.

[212] Hart, *What are they saying about Environmental Theology?* 103.

[213] Hart, *Sacramental Commons*, 17.

vision. The result might well be a spiritual, ecojustice perspective that promotes renewal of Earth and of human communities. To practice in a socioecological context, in the next chapter, I will propose religion-related communities' projects. Those include a comparative research between two socioecologically conscious communities in Korea and Spain, and a development of a pedagogical program for socioecological ethics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIOECOLOGICAL BASES: RELIGION-RELATED COMMUNITIES' PROJECTS

Socioecological *Praxis* in the Contextual Dimension of Ethical Integration

In chapter five, to formulate socioecological projects, I will compare two different kinds of socioecological communities and suggest a pedagogical program that could support religion-related community practice. My preference is to emphasize and analyze the contextual and situational dimension of ethical integration and decision making within problematic situations, rather than elaborate the more conceptual aspects of this process. Ethical integration is not only a theoretical or intellectual activity (i.e., the philosophical assimilation of multiple values, duties, and interests) but also a form of practical reasoning, one performed by conflicted moral agents in complex and often morally and empirically ambiguous situations. I believe the most important "integrative" tasks in any sound model of an ethical project are therefore action oriented and educational in nature. The latter improve individuals' sensitivity to the ethical context of specific practices (and their awareness of the relevant moral principles that bear on these practices), and facilitate the sharpening of individuals' imaginative and analytical skills so that they may learn to take a more reflective, creative, and systematic approach to ethical problems.[1]

[1] Ben A. Minteer, E. A. Corley, and R. E. Manning, "Environmental Ethics beyond Principle? The Case for a Pragmatic Contextualism," *Journal of Agricultural & Environmental Ethics* 17:131-156, 2004, 131-132.

This more contextual, pragmatic, and pedagogical approach to ethics does not deny the role of general principles in ethical problem solving so much as it attempts to place them within a larger experimental process of moral deliberation and inquiry. Such a process can lead to the transformation of values as inquirers rehearse potential courses of action, and share information and engage in arguments with others over what should be done in specific socioecological contexts.[2]

Of course, such pluralistic and dynamic moral models are notoriously messy; principles and frameworks can and do often come into significant conflict despite our best attempts to achieve either conceptual or pragmatic integration. In such cases, hard decisions will undoubtedly have to be made, in context, including by prioritizing previously held principles and integrating them with new, contextually developed or contextually encountered principles, considerations, and values. At the same time, however, there are often opportunities for moral deliberation to settle on practical actions and decisions that "reflect the convergence rather than the divergence of different interests and values."[3] On this point there may be much to learn from established dispute resolution and "negotiated agreement" approaches.[4] Especially, relevant to the vision of practical ethics, I will propose a pedagogical program to emphasize the search for shared interests and mutual gain, and suggest a focus on the development of novel tactics and solutions to complex problems through organized negotiation and consensus-building

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[2] Ibid., 133.

[3] Ben A. Minteer and R. E. Manning, "Convergence in Environmental Values: An Empirical and Conceptual Defence," *Ethics, Place, and Environment* 3:47-60, 2000, 49.

[4] Lawrence Susskind and Jeffrey Cruikshank, *Breaking the Impasse* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 38.

activities.[5] The dialogic interaction between theory and practice, in context, is expressed in John Hart's concept of "praxis ethics."[6]

Hart's Concept of *Praxis*: The Locus of a Dialogic Relationship between Theory and Practice in Context

Where the productive begins with a plan or design, the practical cannot have such a concrete starting point. Instead, we begin with a situation in which questions emerge regarding appropriate ethical conduct to meet concrete needs in that *locus*. We then start to think about this situation in the light of our understanding or consciousness of what is good or what makes for flourishing.

In Aristotle, *praxis* is guided by a moral disposition to act truly and rightly; a concern to further human wellbeing and the good life. A mark of a prudent person is their ability to deliberate rightly about what is personally good and advantageous: not in particular respects, but what is conducive to the good life generally.[7]

In *praxis* there can be no prior knowledge of the right means by which we realize the end in a specific situation. For the end it is only specified in deliberating about the means appropriate to a particular situation.[8] As we think about what we want to achieve,

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[5] Minteer, "Environmental Ethics beyond Principle? The Case for a Pragmatic Contextualism," 142.

[6] John Hart, *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science, and Space* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 186-187.

[7] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics,* Trans. J. A. K. Thomson (London: Penguin, 2004), 209.

[8] Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 147.

we alter the way we think we might achieve that. As we think about the way we might go about something, we change what we might aim at. There is a continual interplay between ends and means. In just the same way there is a continual interplay between consciousness and conduct. This process involves interpretation, understanding, and application in "one unified process."[9] It is something we engage in as human beings and it is directed toward how we relate with other human beings.

Praxis is not simply action based on reflection. It is action which embodies certain qualities. These include a commitment to human wellbeing and the search for truth, and respect for others. It is the action of people who are free, who are able to act for themselves. This action is not merely the doing of something. *Praxis* is creative: it is other-seeking and "dialogic" as Hart emphasizes.[10]

Hart's Notion of *Praxis* for Socioecological Ethics

With a further development and applying to socioecological ethics, John Hart points out that *praxis* is "the locus and focus of dialogic interaction, mutual influence, and integration of theory and practice, text and context, and principles and projects, socioecological ethical *theory* and socioecological ethical *practice*."[11] Therefore, *praxis* is not simply "practice," but "the contextual engagement of both principles and projects

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[9] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), 275.

[10] John Hart, *Cosmic Commons*, 187.

[11] Ibid.

for social, ecological, or socioecological justice and wellbeing."[12] For him, *praxis* ethics is,

> A dynamic, communal, context-to-content formulation of consociated ethical principles and ethical practices developed from, adapted to, and integrated with and within diverse social and ecological settings, and oriented toward social and ecological transformation.[13]

According to Hart, *praxis* ethics is "a dynamic, relational flow of perspectives and principles that emerges in context and in projects on common ground."[14] *Praxis* ethics, since it situates and develops ethical principles and conducts in social settings, rather than derive them solely from academic speculation, recognizes the evolving nature of ethics. It proposes an ongoing, historical, dialogic relationship between theory and practice. Hart states that "*praxis* ethics prefers 'dialogic' to 'dialectical'" efforts toward mutual accommodation of competing ideas and worldviews.[15]

Complementing Christianity's main virtue, Hart affirms that *praxis* ethics' core principle is love. For theists, it advocates "Love the Spirit and love every neighbor"; for secular humanists, it declares: "Embrace the transcendent and love every neighbor."[16] Moreover, Hart extends the concept of *praxis* ethics that expresses a passion for justice and progressive change, to include "hope for the future wellbeing of humanity and other

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[12] Ibid., 186.

[13] Ibid., 186-187.

[14] Ibid., 187.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

intelligent life; Earth and extraterrestrial places; and the biotic community of the cosmic commons."[17] He widens the area of understanding sacramental commons from the Earth to the Cosmos.

Socioecological ethics, for Hart, "includes reflection and action stimulated by social and ecological issues integrated within a particular place and historical time period."[18] He differentiates praxis ethics in terms of context, which is "ethics-in-context" and is not "contextual ethics" based on current experiences. Unlike normative or deontological ethics, it will be "implemented" in context.[19]

Hart further links the notions of socioecological ethics and praxis ethics with considering dialogic relations focused on socioecological justice. He develops his visionary idea of social ethics:

> As ethics-in-context praxis ethics views and analyzes the present in light of the past and anticipatorily ponders or projects, from the present place in time, the future in regard to the issue: eliminating a condition of political, racial, economic, ecological or other oppression for this group in this place, and replacing it with a just situation in a just society. It projects what just conduct is required to affect this context in a beneficial way for the people(s) harmed by their current situation in this place, anticipating resolving the condition or issue in a way that future social impacts will be beneficial and promote ongoing wellbeing.[20]

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[17] Ibid., 188.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 189.

In terms of integration between theory and practice, his socioecological praxis ethics is closely related to the concept of *Shi Chonju* in *Donghak*. His understanding of sacramental commons has finally developed to socioecological praxis ethics. It projects more to the future as a form of futuristic ethics because his envisioned "utopia," which is one of his main concerns, has been elaborated and extended.

Context and *Praxis*

In case of multi-religious contexts, such as that of Korea, the "confluence" that Nam-dong Suh mentions inevitably leads into the subject of dialogue with the existing traditions.[21] As has been suggested above, it is by starting from the historical cultural situation of Korean minjung, rather than from abstract philosophical or doctrinal concepts, that we can draw the most constructive ethics. The *praxis* of *Donghak* is the case in point here. A keen analysis of the cultural/political situation of his time directly influenced the way Su-woon formulated his ethics, and these thoughts in turn gave the minjung their socioecological consciousness. The value of this new religion lay, no doubt, in the way it contributed to the transformation of the culture of its time. Su-woon's task of the conceptualization of his new found teaching was itself a part of the holistic attempt to meet the needs of his time. In the face of a multi-religious situation, his way of dialogue was thoroughly *praxis*-oriented: for him, the concrete life situation of minjung was the hermeneutical key that enabled his dialogue with the various traditions.[22]

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[21] Nam-dong Suh, "Cultural Theology, Political Theology and Minjung Theology," in *CTC Bulletin* Vo1.5 No.3 - Vo1.6 No. 1; December 1984 - April 1985, 12-15.

[22] Ibid., 15.

The debate over *praxis* reminds us that *hyunjang* (현장),[23] the concrete life place of the minjung, is to be the center of dialogue. Comparing dogmas may be a useful mental exercise and may even be an inevitable part of any religious dialogue. A dialogue centered on it, however, can easily fall into the area of a "supra-structure" of ideas far removed from the historical condition of the minjung in the "material infra-structure." Suh's concern is that when theological discussions are transplanted from the soil of *hyunjang*, the place of minjung, to the religions themselves, such discussions cannot reflect the spirit of minjung.[24] Therefore, the relational engagement of socioecological ethics as understood and as embodied in diverse contexts should be considered for the communities' projects.[25]

Donghak's *Praxis*-based Concept

Donghak emphasizes the relational value of theory and practice as a *praxis*-based concept. It expresses its view of life as "heaven is that which eats a(nother) heaven (以天食天, *Yi chon sik chon*)."[26] The idea that heaven eats heaven already presumes the idea that everything existing comes from heaven. Out of this context, emerged the thought of the three respects (三敬, *Sam kyong*) of respecting heaven, respecting human beings, and respecting materiality. This thought of heaven as that which eats a heaven

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[23] It means "context" in Korean terminology of Minjung Theology.

[24] Suh, 15.

[25] Hart, *Cosmic Commons*, 190.

[26] Suk-san Yun, annot., *Juhae Donghak Kyongjeon* (Annotations of Donghak Scripture) (Seoul: Donghak-sa, 2009), 231.

may coincide with the essence of Eucharist in Christianity.[27] In this light of heaven as that which eats a heaven, redemption becomes a universal discourse of life, which opens our eyes to a divine relationality, which embraces even an impersonal life, the universe beyond the narrow boundaries of human beings and Christianity toward cosmic commons.[28]

Furthermore, these thoughts redefine the essence of ethics itself in a new way. They are suggesting not an ontological, metaphysical ethics but the *praxis*-based theory of it. As the studies of the historical Jesus disclose, religion based upon *praxis*-focused and empirical religion is replacing the institutionalized and/or empirical religion. *Donghak* revives the feedback loop structure of the divine and the human by being based upon the East Asian thoughts that still contain the traditional religious layer, which is the archetype of human religiosity. *Donghak* shows us the *praxis*-based feature of ethics as the Spirit that emphasized the ritual form of "setting the position toward the self (向我設位, *Hyang ah sul wui*),"[29] which derived from the idea of hosting the heavenly lord (*Shi Chonju*).

Donghak incorporates features of East Asian and Western religions together in terms of the notions of the divine Spirit within and of the force of becoming without. This is really different from a form of religious syncretism. The thought of the return to

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[27] Suh, 14.

[28] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi* (The Story of Donghak) (Seoul: Sol, 1994), 81.

[29] Ibid., 239.

the One is more than simple syncretism.[30] This idea collaboratively produces a transformational consciousness for some communities because it has been integrated within diverse socioecological settings.

Socioecologically Conscious Communities in Korean Contexts

The *Donghak* Ecological Community of *Huchon Gaebyeok*

The ecological spirituality and movement of *Shi Chonju* leads to the realization of the ecological community of *Huchon Gaebyeok* (후천개벽).[31] This is achieved through the spiritual restoration of one's true self and the social transformation of all destructive patterns of human relationality bringing about a relationship of mutuality, justice, and harmony in the biotic community. The ecological community of cosmic life envisions a natural unity of humanity and the universe (시천주, *Shi Chonju*), the social unity of humanity with each other (양천주, *Yang Chonju*[32]), and the revolutionary unity of humanity and society (체천주, *Che Chonju*[33]). The ecological spirituality of *Shi Chonju*, especially the ethical aspect (*Kagji Buli*) of *Naeyou Silryong* and *Oeyou Kihwa*, has been ethically and politically embodied in Haewol's *Yang Chonju* (養天主, 양천주) and Uiam's *Che Chonju* (體天主, 체천주).[34]

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[30] Ibid., 241.

[31] Ibid., 91.

[32] It literally means "nurturing, ethics, or praxis of heaven."

[33] It literally means "embodying heaven."

[34] Chi-ha Kim, *Donghak Iyagi*, 87.

For Haewol, serving *Hanulnim* (*Shi Chonju*) means to actively raise and nurture *Hanulnim* (*Yang Chonju*) who dwells and works in every existence. This means that no life should be removed from the cosmic life, nor should it be abused, oppressed and starved. Haewol actively develops an ethical practice of *Buli* (불이) into raising the cosmic life by feeding it on *Bab* (밥, rice). Haewol said, "Knowing all things lies in eating a bowl of rice." This means that a bowl of rice is the eternal truth. Here rice is the metaphor for "the activity of life itself" or "its result."[35] A bowl of rice is the outcome of the cooperative work of all forms of life in the universe, that is, the result of the work of *Hanulnim*, the cosmic life. When we nurture *Hanulnim* within us with rice, this means that we return the work of cosmic life and its results to the subjects who participated in the work of *Hanulnim*. Haewol expressed this principle of the food chain in his words: "*Hanulnim* eats *Hanulnim* (以天食天)." Not only humans but all life-forms in the creativity of the cosmic life become *Hanulnim*. This means that a life eats another life. And yet, when life eats life, a life eats one's food from another life's margin (餘白, 여백) and reproduces oneself and then produces a lavish margin around itself for other lives to eat.[36]

Furthermore, Uiam developed Su-woon's *Shi Chonju* and Haewol's *Yang Chonju* into a thought of *Che Chonju* (a socioecological-economic embodiment of serving and nurturing *Hanulnim*). Uiam's revolutionary unity of humanity and society clearly finds

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[35] Ibid., 108.

[36] Ibid., 31.

expression in his ideas of *Sipmochon* (十毋天), *Donghak*'s ten commandments, and *Samjeolnon* (三戰論), the theory of three battles or struggles. While *Sipmochon* is a negative ethical practice of *Kagji Buli* (각지불이), *Samjeolnon* is a moral, psychological, political, and economic struggle for *Kagji Buli* in a positive sense.[37] In the spirituality of *Shi Chonju*, Su-woon declared the natural unity of humanity and the universe by stressing the restoration of the nature of the universe in every self (*Silryong*), and one's realization of the communality of the universe (*Oeyou Kihwa*) through one's ethical practice of these two (*Kagji Buli*). Haewol declared the social unity of human beings with each other by extending Su-woon's individual ethical practice of *Kagji Buli* to social dimensions in his thought of *Yang Chonju*. Uiam declared the revolutionary unity of humans and society by extending Haewol's social dimensions to socioecological-economic structures in his discussions on *Che Chonju*.[38]

Shi Chonju, *Yang Chonju*, and *Che Chonju* are interrelated with each other in serving, nurturing and embodying the cosmic life, providing us with ecological spirituality and movement in all individual, social, and political dimensions in which we are the most self-conscious and responsible life-forms participating in the ongoing creativity of *Hanulnim*, that is, the dynamic process of the integration and disintegration of *Chiki*.[39] Using these three kinds of principles, we can develop a socioecological praxis ethics, in Korean contexts, which we have not encountered before.

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[37] Ibid., 112.

[38] Ibid., 126.

[39] Ibid., 131.

We must decide whether we continue our self-centered life-destroying spirituality and culture only for our benefit, or whether we practice socioecological spirituality and participate in the dynamic interrelationships of life in the universe and can share in the Great Mind of the universe when it serves *Hanulnim*.[40] Most of all, human existence is *Hanulnim* in the sense that one becomes aware of the nature of *Hanulnim* as the best way as one participates in the work of the cosmic life and takes moral responsibility for the ecological community of cosmic life as well as appreciating the mystery and wonder of the cosmic life.[41] Now I propose a practical model of ecological community based on Korean socioecological ethics.

The Guinong Movement and Indramang Community

Background

The Guinong movement is the result of a long-standing peasant movement. Since the 1950s, pioneering nature-friendly farmers have stood against the modernization of the agricultural sector. Groups such as Pulmuwon learned from the Japanese intensification of agriculture that poisoned both farmers and products, and destroyed the quality of the soil and the ecosystems as well. These farmers who held a healthy respect for nature were treated as "anti-government" in the same manner as the democratization movement in the

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[40] Ibid., 194.

[41] Ibid., 271.

1970s and 1980s; yet, their ecological farming methods have been passed on to other farmers who are involved in the peasant movement.[42]

In the 1990s, they started the organic farming movement and *Hansalim* was established to support it by direct trade between the city and the country. The *Hansalim* study group established that the origin of the idea of Life thought is in *Donghak*. As overviewed above, *Donghak* is a combination of the traditional Korean way of thinking which consists of Han, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism with Western Catholicism. It says that a life is in every individual and also in everything with which individuals are interconnected into one whole life, and at the same time we fulfill ourselves in it. This whole life is a cosmic being that is also within oneself. Hence, the individual person must live in a way that cares for other beings, that promotes cooperation with others so that all beings are in harmony. The idea of the socioecological community comes from this idea. The Life thought contains the overcoming of alienation, and it tends toward the communal society, ecological harmony, and cultural interdependence.[43]

In 1996, the national Guinong Movement Headquarters was inaugurated in order to combine the ecological farming peasant movement, the cooperative movement, and the earlier democratization movement. Many discussions and conferences about the eco-community movement among radical social movement activists and scholars took place, and people started gathering to practice it in their real life. The Guinong Movement Headquarters became one of the major organizations to spread eco-community

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[42] Chi-ha Kim, *The Life Thought*, 136.

[43] Ibid., 138.

experiments.[44] Community members included environmental activists, previous labor movement activists, religious movement activists, alternative education supporters, and leaders of village communities who sought autonomy, small-scale and self-sufficiency organic farming, and less consumption of nature.

The Indramang Community is located in the southwestern region of Korea. It was founded by the head monk of Silsang Temple, Dobub and Byung-chul Lee, the head of the Guinong movement headquarters. It is based on a 25-acre site, owned by the Silsang Temple.[45] In the context of Korean Buddhism, Sun Buddhism was introduced in Korea as an alternative philosophy in the ninth century when the unification of the Silla dynasty with Korean Buddhism was in disorder and it became a "palpable force" in Korean Buddhism.[46] Sun Buddhism started through the formation of Gusan Sunmoon (Nine Mountains School of Sun), and the Silsang Temple is their first center built in 828 CE.

Dobub said that the Silsang Temple still plays a role in providing a new alternative philosophy to the current social, political, and economic disorder. It has the first special education college for Buddhist monks and is the major Buddhist seminary for the organization that was founded to raise a new conception of the Buddhist monk. Moreover, in 1998 the Indramang Life Community started on the basis of Buddhist philosophy and the ecologically friendly local community influenced by *Donghak*

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[44] Ibid., 140.

[45] Indramang Community, *Indramang* 21 (2005): 52.

[46] Robert E. Buswell, *The Zen Monastic Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 149.

thought, where all, including monks, believers, activists, locals and nature, live together in harmony.[47]

The following ecologically informed practices are central and clearly visible in the Indramang Community. First, vegetarian food is eaten in the common dining room and there is no food waste thanks to the distinctive way of managing one's own dishes; in fact, it is the way that Buddhist monks have always managed their food. Residents use only one bowl per person and eat all they have brought from the food table. After eating, boiling water is poured into the bowl and it is washed with a piece of Kimchi.[48] The contents are then drunk. As a result, there is no food waste at all. Personal rooms are tiny and contain almost no objects. A communal biological toilet has been built and is used for compost. There is also a recycling area for wet garbage, burnable garbage, paper, and so forth. Non-synthetic detergent is used in as small amounts as possible. The community has their own field for organic farming and either consumes the products themselves or offers them for sale.[49] The case study reveals strong green values and attitudes that are supposed to be transformed into daily life.

Participation

After reading the writings of the monk Dobub, many people have been inspired to join the Indramang Community. Here is a brief account of Dobub's basic teaching in Buddhism, which has influenced the public in considering a new way of life:

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[47] Indramang Community, 52.

[48] A Korean traditional fermented vegetable which Koreans eat along with every meal.

[49] Indramang Community, 53.

> The more materials we have, the more we complain; the more development there is, the more problems appear, not only to humans but also to nature. No one seems to be satisfied with their life. What is the matter? If we think about the past decades, we can say that there have been substantial efforts made toward improving the planet's condition; nevertheless, we failed. We have increasingly serious environmental problems. The biggest problem in the contemporary world is that people divide "self" and "others." Buddhism undermines the categorical distinctions between self and others—we are all in the net of "Indra." The only way we can solve current problems is to return to the right way, the way of living together in harmony in community life. The world, the planet, and the universe are all one organic living community. You are me and I am you. From the Buddhist perspective, spiritual development is prior to material things, and cooperation rather than competition. The most important point, in the Buddhist view, is the acknowledgement of the present situation because we only experience "here and now."[50]

The awareness achieved by the intensity of the experience of "here and now" serves to deepen one's own sense of "interconnectedness" that stretches back into the past and forward into the future. The emphasis on "here and now" thus does not nourish a selfish and narrow concern with immediate individual gratification. It is, rather, the opposite that is achieved.[51]

In Korea the idea of eco-community has been introduced by social movement activists. These activists hold that big cities are overcrowded and are the origin of many ecological problems. They claim that the distinction between town and country should be less obvious so that the whole society becomes ecologically and socially balanced. Residents in the Indramang Community not only sympathize with the ecological concerns associated with declining rural areas, and reject mono-agriculture, but also

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[50] Dobub, *Chungan Chungrag Hasimnicca?* (Are You in Pure Comfort and Joy?) (Seoul: Dongailbo Press, 2000), 46-58.

[51] Ibid., 61.

attempt to reduce the problems of city life by overcoming the distinction between urban and rural life. They believe that the best way to live without damaging nature and human society is to be with the soil—to live in harmony in nature—and this belief permeates their entire way of life. What they see and understand by the idea of eco-community leans more toward harmony with land—all are one—rather than toward physical constructions.[52]

It should also be mentioned that the community provides a haven for those who have no means of financial support. In fact, few of people who participate in the Indramang Community are of working-class origin, and membership is mostly drawn from the middle social levels. These people also bring their savings. They are deeply committed to Dobub's teaching. Most residents seem to be sincere, thoughtful, talented people who have genuine misgivings about the way their society is functioning.[53] They are from all walks of life: teachers, activists, professors, businessmen, and engineers. They can therefore provide for most of life's material necessities, i.e., teachers for education and alternative healers for medical treatment.[54]

In general, the Guinong movement itself has needed a long period of preparation to settle down into a whole new place and life. Yet, most of the Guinong people in Indramang Community acquire advantages. They have graduated from the Guinong school and have a chance to work for farming or other parts; hence, they have become

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Indramang Community, 54.

[54] Ibid., 52.

accustomed to the place: a person has many sympathetic friends; a family does not need to get anxious about their children's education thanks to the community facilities; a new farmer meets experienced farmers on the farm; and there are teachers in the Guinong school. In addition, there are other opportunities for the people who do not want to return to the land just for agricultural purpose, but there are many alternative positions such as building an eco-house and natural dyeing. Above all, indigenous locals no longer adopt the skeptical view of them as dropouts or failures.[55]

The Indramang Daily Routine

The Indramang Community's day begins early as typical Buddhist monks are early risers and the usual day commences at 4:00 a.m. One monk hits a wooden gong while walking around the temple. He then hits the large main bell and its sound wakens the whole village. In each room the occupier then folds their bedding and places it neatly on the floor. Novice monks do a variety of other common chores. Every morning at 4:30 a.m. there is a dawn meditation in the main temple building. This is for monks and those residents who want to take part. Attending meditation in the early morning is entirely optional for residents. Even though the morning time before work is very flexible for the farm and schools, residents make an effort to be early risers and do their own meditations.[56]

Following meditation, breakfast is served at around 6:00 a.m. Meals are prepared by residents who are in charge of the temple dining area, as well as by occasional

[55] Ibid., 59.

[56] Ibid., 53.

community helpers. Breakfast is very simple, consisting of rice porridge and several vegetable dishes. In traditional Korean custom, monks in the temple and elders at home must be the first served, but in this community service takes place on a first-come first-served basis. On one occasion, the visiting head monk waited for food to be served for him but no one did. In this place, individuals serve themselves regardless of their position. It is unusual to eat with monks in Korea as traditionally dining arrangements are separated in temples. Another unusual aspect is the dynamic conversation at mealtime, which may not be found in other Buddhist temples or even at ordinary family meals. No meat is served at all in the temple dining room. Meals are organically grown vegetables grown in a common field. More important than dietary rules are the rules of conduct that govern dining behavior: all food taken is to be eaten and nothing is to be wasted. After the meal, each individual carries his or her dish to the sink and washes the bowl, spoon, and chopsticks. These are then placed in a specified place for the next use.[57]

After breakfast, members proceed to their task. Most of the working positions are open to both genders, including monks. At 11:40 a.m., they have lunch in the communal dining room and this again is a simple meal: a boiled rice mixture with other cereals, soup, and cooked or fresh vegetables. By around 1:00 p.m., people return to their jobs. Afternoons are devoted to regular work activity, followed by supper at 5:10 p.m. in winter, 5:40 p.m. in spring and autumn, and 6:10 p.m. in summer. After supper there are some evening chores to be done.

Most evenings are taken up by planned activity such as general meetings, or religious services depending on each working department. Bedtime is usually 9:00 p.m.

[57] Ibid.

in the temple but not in other parts of the community. The community is not disconnected from the outside world, so entertainment for the residents is unlimited. However, they do not want to waste time sitting in front of the television so members spend time reading and discussing as many books as they can. Also they enjoy a Korean style small drinking party in the evening, and this informal time offers them a deeper "we-feeling."[58]

Ecological Practice

Education Programs

The community runs special environmental education courses aimed at sharing their ecological ideas. The Guinong School's three-month program in Indramang Community became popular nationally; by 2000, 150 alumni had settled in rural areas spreading organic farming around the country.[59] It includes ecological agriculture, local food trade schemes, sustainable settlement, right livelihood, and also ecological ethics including self-reflection, harmony, and meditation practice. This program aims to foster eco-farmers who value nature and life-beings, farmers who succeed in the context of local culture who want to be independent from mass-productive, monotonous agribusiness, and cooperative farmers who share and help with neighbors and nature. Participants in the Guinong Program are serious about changing their lifestyle to rural living and consider taking the program as the first step toward their new life. After completion of the program, many remain in the Indramang to gain further experience.

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[58] Ibid., 54.

[59] Ibid., 90.

Alternatively, others leave for their own organic and natural farming field in other village communities in Korea.

Farming

Organic, natural, and bio-dynamic cultivation is a central concern of the Indramang.[60] They believe that the relationship between cultivator and cultivated is crucial to sound agriculture and to the production of healthy food.[61] Hence, there is an emphasis on no artificial chemicals and a minimum of machinery but more labor intensiveness in farming, not only for the good of the soil, but also for the laborers. In addition, volunteer labor from the outside is welcomed; for example, there are activities such as "Working Weekends" and "Harvesting Weekends." The farmers employ the latest organic methods and they respect local indigenous farming experiences which have succeeded for centuries. They do farming in eco-friendly ways, based on the philosophy of each community, and they share organic produce with cities by direct trade.

Green Consumption

The Indramang Community supports the idea that the individual can change society through green consumption;[62] for instance, they use home-produced or home-made food and crafts, live on very little money, use co-ops, and exchange their products with cities. Moreover, bringing over-packaged goods into the community is prohibited. They also use non-synthetic, biodegradable cleanser and try to use as small amounts as possible.

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[60] Ibid., 61.

[61] Ibid., 94.

[62] Ibid., 73.

Basically, they attempt to be self-sufficient; however, they have realized that strict community self-sufficiency causes disconnection from other people and society. So, community self-sustainability is not particularly desirable. Rather, they encourage interdependence with local communities and also exchange with cities. As previously mentioned, the aim of the Indramang is the revival of local villages.[63] They have organized the Cooperative Association as a response to the need of the market place for the Guinong people's agricultural produce. To do so, they are confronted with a dilemma in terms of a strategy that implies that their self-sufficiency does not fulfill their own fundamental goal. Yet if an insistence on self-sufficiency is retained, then a distance from the rest of society is created that is in effect counter-productive. To spread the idea of ecological lifestyle, the strategy needs to be interconnected with the existing world rather than isolated from the rest of real life as it currently exists.[64]

Sound Energy

Although Indramang residents have not yet achieved the production of their own electricity by building windmills or solar panels, they demonstrate their commitment by putting on several layers of clothing rather than overusing electric heating systems. They also have given up using many electrical products. Moreover, they try to live in a way that suggests to others that it is not necessary to have many electrical goods to successfully maintain a good standard of living. They think it is natural to cut consumption in order to be in harmony with nature, and that there are plenty of

[63] Ibid., 51.

[64] Ibid., 92.

pleasurable returns that come from the simple life.[65] During the evening, farmers gather around a stove in a common room, share grilled potatoes from the stove, and enjoy the time with a little drink and by playing music. Visitors from outside are usually impressed by these events, observing how much the farmers enjoy these small daily parties in the evening, noting that the gatherings are filled with the brotherhood's and the sisterhood's laughter.

Sewage Treatment

Eco-toilets were built for common use in the temple site, the Guinong School, the farm, and the small school. After these dry toilets are used, sawdust is put into the toilets, which balances the compost materials and reduces smells. It is stored and left to mould for a year and then composted with straw. This human sewage is then used for fertilizer. In this way, the practice of their philosophy—all is "interconnected"—is achieved by using human sewage for compost in order to grow their food. None of them complain about the inconvenience of dry toilets, and residents are proud of using them.[66]

Alternative Medical Treatment

Residents in the community attempt to try to treat illness not just by curing the symptom, but by healing the whole human body. They focus on health enhancement and improvement of life quality for all: not only illness, disability, or the dying process but also the promotion of good health. Alternative medicine, herbs and extracts are taken in place of visits to conventional doctors. Residents undertake their own healing treatments

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 101.

because they believe that it helps to fundamentally overcome the illness and also produces fewer side-effects compared with industrialized health care.

Despite some unfavorable circumstances, the Indramang Community remains a part of current Korean society. As a result, all sorts of contradictions and tensions arise, and so they may not be the "ideal society." They do not refuse to use or to enjoy what they call "necessary capitalist materials."[67] They obviously have fewer material belongings compared with people in conventional society. Although they value closeness to nature, appropriate technology is welcomed, and many still own private and common belongings. There are more residents who do what they can do in terms of an eco-friendly lifestyle rather than completely devoting their lifestyle to an ecologically sound way of life. It is true that many visitors to the Indramang are disappointed with the lifestyle of residents because it is not radically different from that of conventional people. In fact, the majority of residents cope well with the absence of capitalist industrial products; yet, at the same time, they respect individuals' free choice in order to allow the community to survive and highly value the connection to the outside.[68] Hence, to survive and to spread their alternative way of life without isolation, a compromise seems to be inevitable. They want to be part of the world and to integrate in it.

Their utopian pragmatism is an important way for building a possible future, and their undertaking is necessary for the accomplishment of the extended socioecological movements on the basis of Korean socioecological ethics. In the next part, I will introduce another successful community model, the Mondragón Cooperative Corporation

[67] Ibid., 102.

[68] Ibid., 87.

in Spain. The fundamental premise of the cooperative movement is a faith in people's natural capacity to improve themselves economically and socioecologically through mutual self-help in democratically controlled economic organizations. The Mondragón cooperatives are the most famous example of democratic worker-owner industrial enterprises that have continued to grow and thrive for almost 60 years.

The Mondragón Cooperative Corporation

Many people are aware of Mondragón, often displayed as the prototype of a successful industrial cooperative, in a world where the cooperative model is more generally identified with the agricultural or service sectors. This cooperative has succeeded in building a regional economic base that is economically viable and self-sustaining. The model is accomplished in retaining wealth that is generated locally from natural goods and human resources in the community.[69]

The Mondragón Cooperative Corporation (MCC) is the world's biggest industrial worker cooperative as well as a successful and long-standing multinational corporation. It is an iconic model for the global cooperative movement, and operates under the ideals of participation and solidarity. In operation since 1956, Mondragón is based in the Basque country. It is indeed the Basque country's leading business group, and the seventh largest in Spain.[70]

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[69] Greg McCloud, *From Mondragon to America: Experiments in Community Economic Development* (Sydney, Canada: UCCB Press, 1997), 2-5.

[70] George Cheney, *Values at Work: Employee Participation meets Market Pressure at Mondragon* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press/Cornell University Press, 1999), 3.

The MCC is based largely on the principle of one worker one vote. It thus stands for participatory worker empowerment through worker share ownership and involvement in decision-making through well-established channels of participation.[71] Rather than a single hierarchical company, Mondragón is an integrated network of cooperative companies owned by workers, whose influence has allowed them to proactively shape the growth of their respective organizations. Mondragón is divided into the sectors of Finance, Industry, Retail, and Knowledge. Its products include high technology, machines, tools, auto parts, cooperative banking, insurance companies, retailing, and so on.[72]

Purpose and Problem

Mondragón's corporate values are cooperation, participation, social responsibility, and innovation.[73] It has aimed to achieve economies of scale through a continually expanding network, while retaining a participatory decision-making model and local independence of the various cooperatives. The network of mutual support between the parts of the complex has been crucial toward regional development.

A CEO's or a manager's wages cannot exceed 70 percent of the equivalent in other companies in the market; however, in reality they are much less than this. The pay ratio between the highest and the lowest paid is generally 3:1 to 5:1 before taxes, and the

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[71] Ibid., 9.

[72] Ibid., 10.

[73] Ibid., 11-17.

minimum pay is generally higher than the local equivalent for similar work.[74] For instance, the CEO of the entire Mondragón Corporation earns only 9 times as much as the lowest paid worker in the entire complex. This is to promote economic democracy and worker empowerment, which is in contrast, for example, with the average ratio of 350:1 in CEO to lowest-paid worker pay in the United States.[75]

Profits represent a means to another end, the continuation of socially acceptable employment, rather than the primary motive of profit as an end to itself. The cooperative model of business politically represents a third way away from the black-and-white model of either socialism or capitalism, toward an economy that realizes in practice people's rights and dignity.[76]

Growing out of this context, the individuals are not simply farm cooperative workers, industrial workers, or even bank workers - the movement has a wider and deeper reach. One of the guiding principles of the movement is *equilibrio*.[77] Roy Morrison explains,

> The Mondragon cooperative system is informed by an essentially ecological consciousness. Ecology… is understood here to encompass social as well as biological reality and their interaction. Today, Mondragon's ecological consciousness is manifested not primarily through environmentalism, but through the practice of a social ecology: the pursuit of *equilibrio* is fundamentally connected to the basic ecological principle of diversity and unity, or, in social

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[74] Ibid., 20.

[75] McCloud, 29.

[76] Ibid., 31.

[77] It means equilibrium in Spanish.

> terms, freedom and community. Its promise is basic change that will harmonize both social life and the relationship between the social and natural worlds.[78]

History

The Mondragón Cooperatives were founded in 1956, their formation inspired by a young priest, José María Arizmendiarrieta (referred to as Arizmendi), who arrived in Mondragón, situated in the heart of the Spanish Basque country, in 1941. The ideas arose from the countryside's traditions of organized labor and models of craftsman guilds, but the same cooperative framework has independently arisen in many other places too. The first steps were taken through the establishment of the Mondragón cooperative technological school, largely for youth to counter the unemployment in Franco's Spain, which had banned many avenues for realizing workers' rights.[79] The experiment thus began as a training facility for apprentices. With the threat of unemployment again from a local factory being shut down, Arizmendi encouraged the workers to purchase and self-govern it. This was called the ULGOR (now FAGOR) steel mill cooperative and was established in 1956. Training and education have been important since the corporation's conception, and in 1997, the group created the University of Mondragón, which today hosts 4,000 students. Father Arizmendiarreta described the motivation behind the cooperative as follows:

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[78] Roy Morrison, *We Build the Road as We Travel* (Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 1991), 12.

[79] Cheney, 11.

> Nothing differentiates people as much as their respective attitudes to the circumstances in which they live. Those who opt to make history and change the course of events themselves have an advantage over those who decide to wait passively for the results of the change.[80]

There is one strike that occurred in the history of Mondragón, in 1974, where workers demanded stronger entitlement rights to the corporation and its actions.[81] As a result, the corporation responded positively and reformed its structure to better accommodate these demands through increases in the powers of the worker-operated General Assembly, Social Councils to address more cooperative-based issues, and the creation of worker Interest Groups to answer the problems on the grassroots level.[82]

The Ten Principles

Father Arizmendi's most important intellectual contribution to MCC was the wider formulation of this structure into ten governing principles, which are firmly held and practiced throughout MCC. There is some flexibility around the edges, but not much. Here's a brief description:[83]

- Open Admission: This means non-discrimination, that all are invited to join the coops—men or women, Basque or non-Basque, religious or non-religious, or from any political party or nonpartisan;

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[80] Sharryn Kasmir, *The Myth of Mondragon* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 18.

[81] Ibid., 21.

[82] William Foote and Kathleen King Whyte, *Making Mondragon: The Growth and Dynamics of the Worker Cooperative Complex* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1988), 3.

[83] Cheney, 35.

- Democratic Organization: The principle of “one worker, one vote” is the core here, but it also entails a wider participatory democracy in the workplace and engagement with the management team;
- Sovereignty of Labor: This is the underlying core belief describing the overall relation between capital and labor, primarily that labor is the dominant power over capital, at least within the coops, if not fully in the wider local community;
- Capital as Instrument: This is a corollary of the point above. It defines capital as an instrument or tool to be used, deployed and governed by labor, rather than the other way around;
- Self-Management: This stresses the importance of training worker-owners not only to better manage their work on the assembly line, but also to train those elected to the governing councils or selected for management teams to have the wider educational background to steer the cooperatives strategically in the wider society and its markets;
- Pay Solidarity: Here is where the worker-owners themselves determine the spread between the lowest-paid new hires and the top managers, with various skill and seniority levels in between. Originally it was set at 3 to 1, but that was adjusted because it was too difficult to retain good managers. Today the average is 4.5 to one, compared to 350 to one as the average for U.S. firms. The highest single coop’s range is 9 to one, and only exists at MCC’s worker-owned bank;

- Inter-Cooperation: This encourages the various coops to cooperate with each other, forming common sectoral strategies, or for transferring members among coops when some firms' orders are temporarily too low to provide enough work;
- Social Transformation: The coops are not to look inward and operate in isolation from the community around them. They are to make use of cooperative values to help transform the wider society. In the Basque Country, for many this means seeing MCC's growth as developing a progressive economy for Basque national autonomy and independence;
- Universal Solidarity: The coops are not only to practice solidarity within themselves, but also with the entire labor movement—and not only in Spain, but across the globe as well. MCC has several projects abroad providing assistance in remote areas of third world nations;
- Education: Just as the first coop was preceded by starting with a school and forming a cadre with a cooperative consciousness, MCC continues to hold education as its core value, seeing knowledge as power—and the socialization of knowledge as the key to the democratization of power in both the economy and the society.

In shaping these principles, a retiring worker may "cash out" on leaving the coop, but he or she is not allowed to sell the share to anyone but a new incoming worker, or to the coop itself to hold until it does. This kept MCC's capital subordinate to its workers, and is a second secret to its success. Most of all, these principles have meant that the MCC workers retained control over their own surplus value, using it to provide themselves a

modest but above-average standard of living while using their resources for measured and planned growth.[84]

Less than six of the 120 coops have failed over 50 years. In the most recent economic crisis, MCC weathered the storm fairly well.[85] No coop failed, salary reductions were modest and the only workers laid off were the trial-period new hires. Now things are picking up again. MCC remains a dominant force in the Basque economy, the leading force in Spain overall and is now making waves in high-tech manufacturing worldwide.

Development of MCC

Mondragón has come a long way from ULGOR, the small workshop making the little single-burner kerosene stove. Today MCC unites 122 industrial companies, 6 financial organizations, 14 retailers, seven research centers, one university, and 14 insurance companies and international trade services. According to the 2012 Annual Report of MCC, its total sales in 2012 were 12.9 billion Euros.[86] The MCC business group is comprised of 256 companies and bodies, around half of which are cooperatives. In 2012, the number of employees was 80,321. The geographical breakdown was 39.7 percent in the Basque Country, 44.2 percent in Spain, and 16 percent abroad. Of the 256

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[84] Cheney, 103.

[85] Ibid., 3.

[8686] The Mondragón's Coop. The 2012 Annual Report of MCC, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Economic-Data/Yearly-Report.aspx (accessed September 15, 2013).

bodies under the MCC, all come into being or have been incorporated into the umbrella corporation gradually since 1956. The cooperatives have usually between 6 and 2,000 workers each. At around 450 workers the cooperatives tend to split, as at this point the bureaucracy becomes too heavy for cooperative solidarity to flourish.[87]

After a probation period, workers may opt to pay a membership fee and then effectively become members. Each member has one vote in the annual General Assembly on policy issues and rights to elect representatives in the corporation.[88] The membership fee is €13,400 in the form of providing share capital to the corporation—this can be borrowed from Mondragón's cooperative bank, which extends the possibility of becoming a member. If a cooperative is experiencing constant failure, it will be shut down after three years, but the workers must then be re-employed elsewhere or retrained.[89]

Just less than a third of the employees are actual cooperative members at present due to an expansion outside the Basque region. The MCC plans to raise this percentage to 75 percent in the coming years through a process of cooperativization. However, the local membership rates are increasing, and between 1997 and 2004, the amount of member-owners doubled.[90]

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Cheney, 94.

[89] Ibid., 96.

[90] Richard C. Williams, *The Cooperative Movement: Globalization from Below* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2007), 120.

The corporation is expanding beyond the Basque region, but while doing so it retains a growing membership rate also in the Basque country and the participation and practices of its original members have not been diminished as a result.[91] The MCC has recently partnered with standard corporations mainly to gain better capital access, but its plans are to gradually cooperatize these branches, in which it mostly holds shareholder majority, by promoting worker participation and equitable wages. The statistics of MCC website tells that Mondragón has partner corporations in 18 countries, including Brazil, the United States, Mexico, several EU nations, and Asian countries.[92]

Decision Making

The Mondragón model of cooperative extends from mere membership to the progressive development of self-management and as a result, to members' partaking in the management of the business. The elected General Assembly, 872 worker-members from the different cooperatives, meets annually to discuss policy and to carry out a review of the MCC cooperatives and the governing bodies.[93] It can for instance deliberate upon matters of profit allocation. Profits are usually reinvested or go to research, and worker dividends go toward retirement accounts. The Governing Council includes 100

[91] The Mondragón's Coop. Mondragón in the World, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Mondragon-in-the-World/Plants-outside-Spain.aspx (accessed September 23, 2013).

[92] Ibid.

[93] The Mondragón's Coop. The 2012 Annual Report of MCC, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Economic-Data/Yearly-Report.aspx (accessed September 23, 2013).

worker-members, and it reviews each cooperative's actions.[94] Other bodies include the Directorship, the Permanent Commission, the General Council, the Commission on Vigilance, and the Social Council, also including worker-members, which oversees worker-management relations.[95]

Ten percent of its cooperatives' profits are steered toward social projects through the Cooperative Education and Promotion Fund, which includes research, training, and educational development. Education therefore serves as a tool of increasing the capabilities and power of the workers over several processes in the corporation.[96]

During the financial crisis, the corporation's focus on workers' interest was demonstrated through reshuffling measures within the corporation and resulting in remarkably low unemployment in relation to other enterprises.[97] Decision-making regarding the possibility of worker layoffs was done through meetings between the managers and the worker-owners. The decision that was reached through this participatory method concluded that 20 percent of workers would take a year's leave, chosen by lottery, during which they would still receive 80 percent of their wages and voluntary re-training. After one year, if the corporation was still being hurt by the

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Williams, 56-62.

[96] Cheney, 78.

[97] Williams, 43.

financial downturn, these workers would return and another group would be chosen in the lottery.[98]

Some Statistical Results

In 2008, despite the economic recession, Mondragón earned a profit and was able to absorb the shock thanks to its prominence in multiple markets, reporting 6 percent income growth rate. Mondragón has twice been selected as one of the "10 European Most Admired Knowledge Enterprises."[99] In 2009, Mondragón accounted for 3.5 percent of the Basque Autonomous Community's GDP and for 7.1 percent of its industrial GDP. In addition, the corporation provided 3.4 percent of total employment.[100]

The Financial Group of Mondragón includes Caja Laboral (Working People's Bank), a cooperative bank and a credit union at the center of the corporation. The bank boasted a profit of 56.5 million euros in 2009, and despite its investments in Lehman Brothers, was therefore not greatly affected by the financial downturn.[101] Lagun Aro manages insurance, retirement funds, and a social welfare system for the members. Eroski, which means "group buying," is part of the retail branch of the MCC and has been the largest Spanish-owned food chain since 1997. In 2005, 88 percent of its workers

[98] Ibid., 49.

[99] The Mondragón's Coop. Economic Data, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Economic-Data/Yearly-Report.aspx (accessed September 6, 2013).

[100] Ibid.

[101] The Mondragón's Coop. Press Room, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/ENG/Press-room/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/1411.aspx (accessed September 6, 2013).

were full-time employed worker-owners. It was formed in 1969 by a common effort of both distributors and consumers.[102]

Evaluations

Mondragón seems to have successfully fought the pressures of maintaining efficiency and a competitive edge in the market economy while retaining its original values of participatory democracy.[103] One of the pressing questions was the serious deliberation of the Managerial Board to increase top managers' salaries, but this was dropped largely due to the objections of worker-managed councils and interest groups.[104] This shows the corporation's commitment to its values of valuing the workers' voice and participation. Additionally, the MCC concluded that in fact the corporation's performance benefited more from the management's commitment to the cooperative values than from salary-related incentives.[105]

Education has played large role in the success of Mondragón by providing training in the management of non-traditional corporations, and this along with lifelong retraining possibilities has ensured a generally talented, devoted, and innovative workforce. Importantly, its success owes greatly to the practice of worker participation in

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[102] The Mondragón's Coop. Who We are, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Who-we-are/Acknowledgements.aspx (accessed September 6, 2013).

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Williams, 75.

corporate governance, which has created real trust, solidarity, and commitment in the workplace.[106]

With annual revenue of 14 billion euros and relatively outstanding participatory governance methods, the company still seems to thrive today.[107] The former chairman, Jose Maria Aldecoa says, "the co-operative model is absolutely flawed, but it has shown itself the least flawed in a crisis of values and models."[108] The Mondragón experiment seems to prove that a corporation can be globally competitive without abandoning cooperative ideals and principles of worker participation.

Socioecological Expressions of Transcendent-Immanent Consciousness

I have described the socioecologically conscious communities in Korean and Spanish contexts. The Indramang Community in Korea originally came from a form of the Buddhist community movement, but it has been influenced by the vision of socioecological spirituality such as *Donghak*'s *Huchon Gaebyeok* and its extended thoughts. According to the practices of the Indramang Community, participation and the sense of interconnectedness are the main idea, which is the same in the Mondragón Cooperative Movement in Spain.

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[106] Ibid., 77.

[107] The Mondragón's Coop. The 2012 Annual Report of MCC, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Economic-Data/Yearly-Report.aspx (accessed September 23, 2013).

[108] Ibid., 131.

Especially, the MCC's participatory governance system expresses the socioecological transcendent-immanent consciousness well because one of the MCC's major roles is to "embrace the transcendent and love every neighbor" by way of actively supporting many local industries and communities, while Hart emphasizes love as a single core principle in his description of praxis ethics.[109] According to the 2012 Annual Report of MCC, about ten percent of the cash flow of the network was invested in the communities and in charitable institutions, while another principle is to maintain as little spread between the bottom wage and the top as possible.[110] In this influential movement from the base, the Mondragón cooperatives show a way to build resilient community social institutions. This social health will be valuable as we head into the future of the exhaustion of industrial society and its fragmentation.

For maintaining the balance between theory and practice in our ideal socioecological communities, we need more "ethics-in-context,"[111] leading to the transformation of society and local communities. As Jürgen Moltmann affirms, both "immanent transcendence" and "transcendent immanence" are revealed in the creation. Therefore, we can perceive "the finite in the infinite, the temporal in the eternal, and the evanescent in what endures."[112]

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[109] Hart, *Cosmic Commons*, 187.

[110] The Mondragón's Coop. The 2012 Annual Report of MCC, http://www.mondragon-corporation.com/language/en-US/ENG/Economic-Data/Yearly-Report.aspx (accessed September 15, 2013).

[111] Hart, *Cosmic Commons*, 188.

[112] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 268.

Overall, both *Donghak* and sacramental commons provide us a common alternative worldview that can be thought of as socioecological praxis consciousness and ethics. The Indramang Community Movement in Korea emphasizes the notion of "participation" and "solidarity"; the MCC has the same values. This idea further produces a pedagogical program for defining the communities and movements in multicultural contexts. In the next part, I will propose a pedagogical framework for religion-related communities to formulate and categorize different perspectives on socioecological ethics.

Socioecological Approaches to Socioecological Wellbeing

Developing a Pedagogical Program for Religion-related Communities

In addition to creating a comparative socioecological ethics framework, my proposed project leads to the preparation of a wide-ranging set of case studies in multicultural ecological contexts. This would provide a useful database for ecological ethicists, and for students interested in learning how ethical questions emerge in the course of field practices, and about the moral claims that may be placed on people in a given situation.[113] As is evident in the rapid growth of the field of ecological ethics, such a case database can be an important educational and analytical tool, sharpening understanding of ethical issues, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.[114]

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[113] Jeff L. Dubycha and Charles K. Geedey, "Adventures of the Mad Scientist: Fostering Science Ethics in Ecology with Case Studies," *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 1:330–333, 2003, 331.

[114] Timothy F. Murphy ed., *Case Studies in Biomedical Research Ethics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2004), 35.

The development of a similarly detailed and organized case literature in socioecological ethics would allow ethicists, scientists, and students to compare a variety of ethical, scientific, and social issues across experiential and value contexts, and would provide them with an opportunity to learn from the specific differences and similarities of the issues and cases.[115] Such cases, developed as full educational modules complete with discussion questions, background readings, and supporting materials, could then be housed on a website that would serve as an integrative focus for interdisciplinary work and dialogue in the area of practical ethics.[116] Through these kinds of activities, I hope to facilitate interdisciplinary conversation, and preparation of a socioecological ethics "tool kit" for religion-related communities' consideration, and as a stimulus to contextual projects.

Overview of Pedagogical Approaches for Socioecological Ethics

One strategy for addressing the multiplicity of theoretical and practical possibilities for religion-related communities within praxes of socioecological ethics consists of developing a map of a pedagogical overview. This involves grouping similar propositions within categories, describing each of these groupings and distinguishing it from the others, while highlighting points of relative divergence and similarity, opposition and complementarity.

The dissertation will attempt to define different approaches in pedagogical programs for the environment as general ways of envisioning and practicing

[115] Ibid., 37.

[116] Dubycha, 331.

socioecological ethics. Each approach comprises a plurality and diversity of propositions; it is not a monolithic category. Within it a variety of specific trends or many ramifications will be observed. Moreover, a single proposition can be associated with two or three different approaches, according to the angle from which it is analyzed. If each approach presents a set of specific characteristics which differentiates it from others, this does not imply that the various approaches are mutually exclusive in every respect: some will have one or more characteristics in common, creating zones of overlap. As such, the proposed mapping of approaches is intended as an analytical tool kit for exploring the manifold variety of pedagogical propositions in the area of socioecological ethics.

This dissertation will identify and briefly explore fifteen approaches for pedagogical programs. Some have a longer history than others, having been dominant during the first decades of environmental education (the 1970s and 80s), while others correspond to more recent preoccupations. These approaches might therefore be viewed from a diachronic perspective because each one has emerged and developed within a particular historic and cultural context.[117] However, it must also be recognized that these approaches coexist today and may be studied from a synchronic point of view.

The oldest approaches (numbers 1-7) are not outmoded. They are rooted in fundamental aspects of human-environment relationships; they have been further enriched over time. Moreover, the newest approaches (numbers 8-15) are expanding some other pedagogical horizons, and they are not always more appropriate than the

[117] Dubycha, 333.

oldest.[118] The merits of each approach as a source of inspiration must be gauged both in terms of the particular world view it promotes and with respect to the unique characteristics of each pedagogical situation.[119]

Each of these approaches will be presented according to the following parameters: (1) dominant conceptions of ecology and community it conveys; (2) primary aim of environmental education, as explicitly or implicitly expressed; (3) main ideas and strategies; (4) examples of activities or pedagogical models that illustrate the approach, or illustrate more specific trends within it; and (5) some questions or assertions designed to stimulate critical analysis of the advantages, limitations, and issues associated with each approach.[120]

1. Naturalist Approach

This approach is focused on human relationships with nature. It may be cognitive (learning about nature) or experiential (living in nature and learning from it), or affective, or spiritual, or artistic (allying human creativity with nature's own).[121] The naturalist approach's propositions most often recognize the intrinsic value of nature, above and beyond the natural goods it provides. The tradition of the naturalist approach is an ancient one, when one considers "lessons of nature" or learning through immersion or imitation

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[118] Shoshana Keiny and Uri Zoller Eds., *Conceptual Issues in Environmental Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 23.

[119] Ibid., 29.

[120] Ibid., 8.

[121] Ibid., 29.

in social groups whose cultures are tightly interwoven with their relationship to natural settings. As often related, the naturalist approach has been more specifically associated during the last century with the "nature education" movement and certain proposals of "outdoor education."[122]

This approach is sensualist, but also spiritualist; it is about exploring the symbolic aspect of our relationship to nature and understanding that, as beings within nature, we are part of it. Also this approach highlights the importance of regarding nature as both educator and site of learning, and suggests outdoor education is one of the most effective means of learning about/within the natural world and imparting an understanding of nature's inherent right to exist by and for itself - humankind's place in nature being definable only in context of this ethos.[123]

2. Conservationist Approach

This approach brings together propositions centered on resource "conservation," in terms not only of quantity, but also of quality: water, soil, energy, plants, animals, the genetic pool, our constructed heritage, and so on.[124] Here, discussions about "conserving nature" or "conserving biodiversity" are largely focused on a conception of nature as a

[122] Ibid., 35.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid., 79.

pool of "resources," or instrumental beings. Concern for environmental "management" is a recurring theme.[125]

"Conservation education" has always been an integral part of family or community education in settings where needed natural goods are scarce. It developed, for instance, during wartime in the middle of the last century and at the first signs of natural goods depletion following the post-war economic "boom." 1960s' Korea was in the same situation. Many environmental education programs based around the now classic three R's (Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling), or those rooted in environmental management concerns (e.g., water, waste, or energy management), are all part of the conservationist approach.[126] The emphasis is generally on the development of environmental management capacities. There is a call for action through individual behaviors and collective projects. More recently, consumer education−beyond a self-centered focus on "managing one's budget"−has more explicitly integrated ecological concerns about resource conservation, linked to issues of social equity.[127]

3. Problem-Solving Approach

The problem-solving approach emerged in the early 80s in Korea, when the growing acceleration of ecological problems came to light. It groups together propositions in which the ecology is considered first as a set of problems. This approach

[125] Ibid., 49.

[126] Clover, 93.

[127] Ibid.

adopts the central vision of environmental education proposed by UNESCO (1978) within the framework of its International Environmental Education Program.[128] The goal is to inform or help people to instruct themselves and learn about environmental issues, as well as develop the attitudes and skills for solving them. As is the case for the conservationist approach, with which the problem-solving approach is frequently associated, there is a call for action, in terms of changes in individual behavior or collective action.

One of the most significant propositions within this approach is that of Harold R. Hungerford and his team, who designed a pedagogical model based on the sequential development of problem-solving skills: identifying an environmental issue (comprising ecological and social aspects), investigating this issue (including analyzing the protagonists' values), diagnosing the problem, searching for solutions, evaluating possible solutions, and choosing the optimal ones.[129] The actual implementation of solutions within action projects was not necessarily part of this teaching/learning model, which remains a "primer" for behavioral change and action.[130] In a more recent version of this pedagogical model, some authors introduce the idea of action for change (not limited to problem solving) and insist on the importance of developing a "vision" or a

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[128] Keiny, 49.

[129] Harold R. Hungerford, R. A. Litherland, R. B. Peyton, J. M. Ramzey, A. M. Tomara, and T. Volk, *Investigating and Evaluating Environmental Issues and Actions: Skill Development Modules* (Champlain, IL: Stipes Publishing Company, 1992), 73.

[130] Ibid., 64.

"consciousness" that gives meaning to action, thus showing some crossover with the praxis approach presented in point ten.

4. Systemic Approach

The systemic approach is indispensable to proper recognition and understanding of ecological realities and problems. Systemic analysis allows for identification of the various components of an ecological situation or issue, as well as for distinguishing their interrelations, including the relations among biophysical and social elements. Such an analysis allows for the construction of a "big picture" view which corresponds to a synthesis of the reality under study.[131] This global vision leads to a clearer perception and better understanding of the ecological system's dynamics and ruptures, as well as its evolutionary trends. The systemic approach draws on, among others, the input of ecology, that transdisciplinary biophysical science which attracted increasing attention during the 70s, and whose concepts and principles inspired the field of human ecology.[132] Here, the approach to ecological realities is cognitive by nature, and the perspective is one of enlightened decision-making. Intellectual skills relating to analysis and synthesis are especially solicited.

The following questions open avenues of discussion around the systemic approach: Is adopting a systemic approach a "necessary and sufficient" way to understand ecological realities? Does an "ecosystem approach" contribute something

[131] Ibid., 84.

[132] Clover, 89.

more or different to systemic thinking? Must solutions to ecological problems necessarily pass through "a reform of thinking," that leads to an understanding of larger complexities and ultimately to a comprehensive vision of realities, as suggested by certain ecological ethicists?[133]

5. Scientific Approach

Some environmental education propositions place the emphasis on a scientific approach, with the aim of tackling ecological realities and problems rigorously, better understanding them and, more specifically, identifying their cause-and-effect relationships. The main process is the induction of observation-based hypotheses, and the verification of these hypotheses through new observation or experimentation. Here, Environmental education is often associated with the development of knowledge and skills in environmental sciences.[134] This approach is predominantly a cognitive one: the environment is an object of knowledge and that knowledge is necessary for more appropriate decision making.

Skills of observation and experimentation are especially solicited. Propositions within this approach include several by authors whose interest in environmental education stems from concerns related to the field of science teaching, or from their fields of interest or specialization in biology, chemistry, or environmental sciences. For science teachers and science education specialists, the ecological theme can be a "hook," a

[133] Ibid., 91.

[134] Ibid., 96.

subject that stimulates an interest in sciences or one that offers a social and ethical dimension to scientific activity.[135] The general perspective is one of better understanding in order to better orient action.

The link between environmental education and science teaching has been the object of much ongoing debate. An examination of the following highly contrasting comments may stimulate critical discussion: "Environmental education threatens the integrity of the disciplines. We risk draining science of its disciplinary content. If, for instance, we introduce ecological issues, we are not doing chemistry. Value education is not science!" "The environment is mainly a good trigger, an attractive pretext, a motivator for learning sciences."[136] As Hungerford states, "If we relegate environmental education to the teaching of sciences, it loses its meaning. It cannot suffice to impose a scientific method on the study of environmental biophysical realities, to impose a quest for the right answer, as is the custom within sciences."[137]

6. Humanist Approach

This approach places the accent on the human dimension of the environment, forged at the junction of nature and culture. The environment is not understood merely as a set of biophysical elements which requires only to be approached with objectivity and rigor in order to be better understood and thereby to permit better interaction. Rather, it

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[135] Ibid., 101.

[136] Ibid., 129.

[137] Hungerford, 121.

corresponds to a place of existence, of living with all its historical, cultural, political, economic, emotional, and other aspects.[138] It cannot be considered without taking into account its significance and its symbolic value. Environment as a "heritage" is not simply natural; it is also cultural. Human constructions and arrangements bear witness to an alliance between human creativity and the possibilities of nature.[139] Architecture, among others, lies at the heart of this interaction. The environment includes the environment of the city, the public square, cultivated gardens, and so on, just as it is the environment of the rural countryside, with its many diverse means of "inhabiting" the land.[140]

The point of entry for understanding the environment is often the landscape. The landscape is most often shaped by human activity; it speaks, as Hungerford explains, "both of the evolution of the natural systems that make it up and of the socio-cultural trajectory of the human populations that have inhabited it."[141] Such an approach to the environment is often favored by educators interested in viewing pedagogical programs on environment through the lens of geography and/or other human sciences.

7. The Value-centered Approach

Many educators claim that the foundation of our relationship to the environment is ethical in nature: it is thus necessary to intervene at this level, be it as a priority or as a

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[138] Ibid., 10.

[139] Ibid., 27.

[140] Clover, 102.

[141] Hungerford., 89.

transversal or background concern. Indeed, all actions are rooted in a set of values, which are more or less conscious and coherent among themselves.[142] Therefore, a number of different propositions for a pedagogical program put the emphasis on developing "ecological values." Some encourage the adoption of ecological "morals," prescribing a code of socially desirable behavior, yet others attain a more fundamental level and focus on the development of a genuine "ethical competency"—the construction of one's own value system.[143] Not only must one be able to analyze the values of protagonists in a given situation or general social values, but also, above all, clarify one's own values or consciousness in connection with one's actions and conduct.[144]

What range of "ecological values" is adopted by the diverse propositions within this approach? Are they truly "ecological values"? Indeed, what are "ecological values"? For each proposition, is the pedagogical approach coherent with the chosen values? What contribution might ethical education make to environmental education? What are the links between philosophy and ethics, and between "moral education" and "education in/about ethics"? These questions, among others, may guide a critical examination of this ethical approach. In other respects, a substantive debate may be engaged around the following affirmation: "Schooling must not inculcate values; it must not indoctrinate youth in a system of values."[145]

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[142] Ibid., 221.

[143] Clover, 99.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Hungerford, 135.

8. Holistic Approach

According to the proponents of this approach, an exclusively analytic and rational approach to ecological realities is at the origin of many contemporary problems. Environmental educators must take into account not only all the diverse aspects of socioecological realities, but also the different dimensions of the person who enters into relation with such realities, of the globality and complexity of his or her "being in the world."[146] The meaning of "global" is distinct from "planetary" here; rather, it means holistic, referring to the fullness of each being as well as to the web of relations which connects beings with one another, and from which they draw meaning and significance.[147]

The holistic approach, like the others, does not consist of homogeneous propositions. Some, for instance, are based more on psycho-pedagogical concerns (i.e., focused on the overall development of the person in relation to his or her environment); others are founded in a real worldview in which all beings are interrelated, which calls for an "organic" understanding of the world and participatory action within and with the environment.[148]

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[146] Ibid., 136.

[147] Ibid., 133.

[148] Clover, 21.

9. Bioregionalist Approach

According to Peter Berg and Raymond Dasmond, a bioregion is a term which "refers both to geographic terrain and a terrain of consciousness—to a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place."[149] A bioregion may be defined by two essential characteristics: it is a geographic area identified more by its natural and cultural characteristics than by its political boundaries; and this "inhabited" area makes reference to a sense of identity on the part of the human communities that live there, in connection with and having knowledge of the territory and a desire to adopt ways of life that will contribute to valorization of the region's natural community.[150] The bioregionalist perspective leads us to see a place from the point of view of natural and social systems, whose dynamic relations contribute to creating a sense of "living place" rooted in natural as much as cultural history.[151]

Bioregionalism grew out of the back-to-the-earth movement (such as Guinong Movement in Korea), towards the end of the last century, in the wake of the disillusionment of industrialization and massive urbanization.[152] It is a socioecological movement, one which is particularly concerned with the economic aspect of "managing" this shared dwelling place that is the environment. Within the bioregionalist approach, environmental education is aimed at developing a privileged relationship with the local or

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[149] See in Frank Traina and Susan Darley-Hill eds., *Perspectives in Bioregional Education* (Troy: North American Association for Environmental Education, 1995), 2.

[150] Ibid, 4.

[151] Ibid., 11.

[152] Ibid., 9.

regional environment and a sense of belonging to it, as well as stimulating a commitment to increasing the value of this bioregion, for example through eco-development community projects.[153]

What might be the contribution of the bioregional approach to a relevant pedagogical program in the contemporary context of globalization? What principles of socio-economic ethics would be coherent with the bioregional perspective? How might a bioregional approach be adopted in an urban environment? Such questions may contribute to a critical examination of the bioregional approach within pedagogical programs for socioecological ethics.

10. Praxis Approach

This approach emphasizes learning in action, by action, and for the ongoing improvement of action. It is not a matter of developing knowledge and skills beforehand, in view of potential action, but rather of placing oneself into a situation of action and learning through, by, and for that project. Such learning calls for reflexivity throughout the project. As mentioned earlier, praxis essentially consists of integrating reflection and action such that they feed one another.[154]

The foremost process within the praxis approach is that of action-research, the principle aim of which is to effect change within a milieu (i.e., the environment itself as well as the people in it) through a participatory dynamic which involves the various

[153] Ibid., 12.

[154] Hungerford., 115.

actors of the situation to be transformed.[155] In pedagogical programs for the environment, the changes envisioned are both socioecological and educational.

The following questions may help in examining the possibilities and challenges of action-research: Is "action-research" a hackneyed term? Is praxis truly achieved in projects generally classified as "action-research"?[156] What strategies may be adopted to facilitate integrating reflection within an action process? What types of knowledge may action-research help to develop? Does learning in and by action necessarily imply a reflexive approach?

11. Socially Critical Approach

The praxis approach is often associated with that of social criticism. The latter approach is inspired by the field of "critical theory," which was previously developed within the social sciences and which entered the field of education.[157] This approach essentially promotes analysis of the social dynamics underpinning ecological realities and problems: analysis of intents, positions, arguments, explicit and implicit values, and the decisions and actions of the various protagonists in a given situation.[158]

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[155] Ibid., 118.

[156] Ibid., 201.

[157] Clover, 192.

[158] Hungerford, 121.

Are the stated rationales for action coherent with the projects undertaken? Is there a rupture between words and action?[159] Power relationships in particular are identified and denounced: Who decides what? For whom? Why? How is the relationship to the environment subjected to a dominant set of values? What is the relationship between knowledge and power?

The same questions are posed vis-à-vis educational realities and problems, whose connection to ecological issues must be made explicit: education is at once the reflection of social dynamics and the incubator of social change.[160] Examples of critical questions include: Why does integrating environmental education in a school setting pose a problem? In what way might a pedagogical program focused on the environment help to "dismantle the pernicious legacy of colonialism in developing countries?"[161]

The posture of social criticism, by definition political in scope, aims to transform realities.[162] Action plans emerge from or during investigation, in a perspective of emancipation, of freedom from alienation. It is a courageous stance, in that it begins by confronting oneself and implies the questioning of commonplace ideas, received "wisdom," and dominant trends.[163]

This proposition is based on pedagogy of interdisciplinary and community-oriented projects that aim to develop critical "action-knowledge" for resolving local

[159] Ibid.

[160] Ibid., 122.

[161] Ibid., 121.

[162] Keiny, 19.

[163] Clover, 44.

problems and furthering local development.[164] It stresses the importance of addressing issues that are "contextually relevant and significant" to people, and highlights the "fecundity of knowledge dialogues": formal scientific knowledge, experiential knowledge, traditional knowledge, local everyday knowledge, and so on.[165] These diverse types of knowledge must be compared and contrasted, nothing must be taken for granted; diverse discourses must be appraised within a critical approach in order to better inform action.[166] It is also necessary to clarify the rational or theoretical foundation that supports action, and to create the conditions for progressively refining a theory of action. Theory and action are tightly interwoven from a critical perspective.[167]

12. The Feminist Approach

The approach is placed on the power relationships that still advantage men over women in a number of contexts, and on the need to integrate feminist viewpoints and values in areas of governance, production, consumption, and other forms of social organization.[168] In ecological matters, the feminist approach sheds light on the relations between the domination of women and the domination of nature: working to re-establish

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[164] Keiny, 22.

[165] Clover, 44.

[166] Ibid., 27.

[167] Hungerford, 121.

[168] Ibid., 72

harmony with nature cannot be dissociated from a social project aiming to harmonize relations among men and women.[169]

The feminist approach is nevertheless opposed to the prevalence of the rational perspective to ecological issues as it is most frequently observed in the theories and practices identified with the socially critical approach.[170] As is the case for the holistic approach, intuitive, affective, symbolic, spiritual, or artistic approaches to ecological realities are also valued. From an ethics of responsibility, emphasis is placed on solicitude:[171] taking care of other humans and those other than human, with sustained and affectionate attention:

> Women are often the first environmental educators. In their homes and communities they pass along a unique understanding of the natural processes which take place around them. For centuries, women have been involved in teaching traditional medicine and health care, seed collection and the maintenance of biodiversity, farming and the processing and preservation of food, forestry and water management, skills which will become increasingly more vital as ecological destruction continues.[172]

If the initial focus of the feminist movement was on bringing to light and "denouncing male-female power relationships," the approach trend is more towards working collectively to rebuild harmonious relations "through participation in joint projects wherein each individual's strengths and talents are leveraged

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[169] Ibid., 73.

[170] Ibid., 121.

[171] Clover, 16.

[172] Ibid., 18.

complementarily."[173] To this effect, pedagogical programs for the environment offer a particularly interesting context, since they imply a rebuilding of relations with the world.

Analysis of the feminist approach raises fundamental questions. For example: Is women's relationship with nature truly different from men's? What are the advantages and disadvantages of comparing women's oppression to Earth's abuse? To what extent are the two forms of oppression identical, and how are they not? What particular value does the feminist approach seek to promote?

13. Ethnographic Approach

The ethnographic approach emphasizes the cultural dimension of ecological relationships. Environmental education should not impose a vision of the world; the culture of reference of the populations or communities must be taken into account. This approach proposes not only that pedagogy should be adapted to different cultural realities, but also that inspiration be drawn from the pedagogy of these diverse cultures, which have another relationship to the environment.[174]

We may question the coherence between activities stemming from a "western" scholastic culture and the "ethnographic" foundations from which they are seeking to draw inspiration.[175] What hazards and drifts may be associated with environmental

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[173] Ibid., 21.

[174] Hungerford, 133.

[175] Ibid., 136.

education initiatives that attempt to draw on indigenous or any other ecological ethics?[176] How might these pitfalls be avoided? What might the principal contributions of the ethnographic approach be to environmental education? What are the areas of linkage and divergence between intercultural education and ethno-education?[177]

14. Eco-education Approach

This approach is dominated more by educational concerns than ecological ones. There is no question of pragmatic solving problems or "managing" the environment, but rather of advantaging our relationship with the environment to further personal development as the basis of meaningful and responsible action.[178] The space between the person and his or her environment is not empty; it is there that a person's relationships, his or her linkages with the world, are made. According to Clover, the environment "forms us, deforms us and transforms us, as much, at least, as we form it, deform it, transform it."[179] In this zone of accepted or refused reciprocity is our relationship with the world played out. In this border space-time are constructed the bases of our actions towards the environment.[180]

The eco-education approach invites us to consider environmental education as an essential dimension of education, which concerns our relationship with the world. It is

[176] Clover, 191.

[177] Hungerford, 136.

[178] Clover, 115.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Hungerford, 90.

focused on the person-environment relationship. However, the following question arises: What of the social dimension of our relationship to the environment in the propositions of eco-education? As another example of questioning and discussing this approach, one may ask whether the expression "eco-education," in a broadened, inclusive sense, might be suitable to describe any form of education dealing with relationships to the environment, thereby entering the network of terms such as "eco-development, eco-feminism, eco-management, etc.," and highlighting its links with "political ecology, ecological economics," socioecological ethics, and so on.[181]

15. Sustainability Approach

The idea of sustainability, which gained in popularity during the mid-80s, gradually penetrated the environmental education movement and asserted itself as a dominant perspective. In its effort to respond to the recommendations contained in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, following the Earth Summit in 1992, UNESCO replaced its International Environmental Education Program (1975-1995) by a program entitled Educating for a Sustainable Future (UNESCO, 1997), the goal of which is to contribute to the promotion of sustainable development.[182] It postulates that economic development is at the basis of human development and recognizes that a "sustainable" economy is closely linked to the conservation of natural resources and the equitable sharing of

[181] Ibid.

[182] UNESCO, *Educating for a Sustainable Future: A Transdisciplinary Vision for Concerted Action* (Paris: UNESCO, 1997), 23.

resources.[183] Learning to make rational use of today's resources is essential if there are to be enough for everyone and enough remaining to meet the needs of future generations. Environmental education thus becomes one tool among others in the cause of sustainable development.[184]

According to the supporters of this approach, a pedagogical program for the environment has limited itself to a naturalist approach and has neglected to encompass social preoccupations, and especially economic considerations, in the treatment of ecological questions. Education for sustainable development would permit that deficiency to be mended at last.[185]

As early as 1992, upholders of the sustainable development ideology proposed a reform of the entire educational system for this purpose.[186] A "new" approach to education would thus be established. A document entitled *Reshaping Education for Sustainable Development*, published by UNESCO and distributed at the Eco-Ed Congress intended as a follow-up to Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, contains passages such as the following:

> The function of education in sustainable development is mainly to develop human capital and encourage technical progress, as well as fostering the cultural conditions favoring social and economic change. This is the key to creative and effective utilization of human potential and all forms of capital, ensuring rapid

[183] Ibid., 25.

[184] Ibid., 26.

[185] Hungerford, 203.

[186] UNESCO, 23.

> and more equitable economic growth while diminishing environmental impacts. Empirical evidence demonstrates that general education is positively correlated with productivity and technical progress, because it enables companies to obtain and evaluate information on new technologies and economic opportunities.[187]

It is important to consider however that the "developmentalist" approach is no more monolithic than the preceding ones.[188] It gives rise to diverse conceptions and practices. Notable among them are those that align themselves more with the concept of sustainability. "Sustainability" is generally associated with a less economist vision of sustainable development, in which concerns for maintaining life and social equity are more explicit.[189]

Questions that may be raised in pursuing the discussion around this approach include: Is there any conflict between "sustainability" and "development? Is the education for sustainable development a truly "new" educational proposal? Does it correspond to a "new paradigm"? What might be the contribution of the theoretical and practical field of "sustainable development" to a pedagogical program of the environment?[190] Is sustainable development a political program? Should it be an educational project? What system of values does it embrace? Could we say that sustainable development education has become a hegemonic proposition?[191] And finally,

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[187] Luis Albala-Bertrand, *Reshaping Education towards Sustainable Development* (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1992), 3.

[188] Ibid., 5.

[189] Ibid., 12.

[190] Ibid., 19.

[191] Ibid.

how ought we to respond to the following statement: "Environmental education is naturalist and thus too narrow; it must be replaced by education for sustainable development, which is a comprehensive pedagogical project"?[192]

Examination of the Approaches' Mapping

The effort to identify and characterize approaches in pedagogical program for the environment leads to the construction of a typology of the various ways of conceptualizing and practicing socioecological ethics (Figure 1). Clearly, further analysis, especially for the ethical domain, remains to be pursued in an ongoing mapping of this field. Nonetheless, this proposed systemization may be useful in that it highlights the diversity or range of variation in pedagogical propositions in socioecological ethics and thereby contributes to "celebrating" the richness of this field.[193] Projecting the spectrum of theoretical and practical possibilities allows us recognize the creative work of pedagogical programs for the environment "actors" over the last decades, "to pay homage to their contribution in reflecting on the epistemological, hermeneutic, ethical, cultural, spiritual, esthetical, political, economic" and other dimensions of our relationship to the environment, and on the role of a pedagogical program in this regard.[194]

Such a mapping may constitute a didactical tool, providing reference points and/or sources of inspiration for planning adequate educational strategies, according to

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[192] Ibid., 23.

[193] Albala-Bertrand, 17.

[194] Ibid., 94.

the intended objectives and context of intervention.[195] It may also be useful for ecological ethicists' professional development in formation of a pedagogical program. More than describing the various approaches, it offers avenues for more profound exploration and a critical analysis of each strand of thought and practice. It allows for each one to be contrasted with the others. It enables the identification of complementary aspects, in view of a comprehensive pedagogical program for religion-related communities, one which encompasses all the many diverse dimensions of our relationship to nature.[196] This typology may also assist activists "to situate their own theoretical choices and their own practices on a map of the pedagogical landscape, to analyze and enrich them."[197]

Finally, it should be recalled that "the map is not the territory."[198] Rarely can a specific pedagogical project or proposition be bound up in a single approach. A category is no more than a particular attempt to apprehend a reality among others. The landscape of socioecological ethics is far richer than this mapping can convey—and indeed the latter remains an unfinished project, one whose evolution will follow the moving and diversified route of a pedagogical program for the environment.[199]

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[195] Keiny, 6.

[196] Albala-Bertrand, 19.

[197] Clover, 112.

[198] Ibid., 13.

[199] Hungerford., 201.

Approach	Conception of Environment	Ethical Domain	Goals of Pedagogical Program	Examples of Strategies
Naturalist	Nature	Ecocentrism	Reconstruct relationship with nature	Immersion; Interpretation; Sensorial games
Conservationist	Resource	Animal ethics	Develop skills related to environmental management	Guide of behaviors; 3 Rs set of activities
Problem-Solving	Problem	Research ethics	Develop problem-solving skills; from diagnosis to action	Case study; Issue analysis
Systemic	System		Develop systemic thinking; analysis and synthesis	Case study; ecosystem analysis
Scientific	Object of study	Research Ethics	Acquire knowledge in environmental sciences	Observation; Experimentation
Humanist	Socio-cultural context	Virtue ethics	Know socio-cultural circumstances	Investigation; Landscape reading
Value-centered	Value systems	Deontological ethics	Develop a system of ethics	Analysis, clarification of values
Holistic	Gaia, Organic being	Ecocentrism	Develop an "organic" understanding of the world	Free exploration; visualization
Bioregionalist	Place of belonging, Community	Environmental ethics	Develop competencies for local community	Community project
Praxis	Locus of action	Consequentialist ethics	Learn for ecological action and develop reflexive skills	Action research
Socially Critical	Object of transformation	Consequentialist ethics	Deconstruct socioecological realities in view of transforming them	Case study; Debate; Action research
Feminist	Object of solicitude	Deontological ethics	Integrate feminist values into the human-environment relationship	Case study; Immersion
Ethnographic	Cultural identity	Environmental ethics	Know the cultural dimension and relationship with the environment	Fables, stories, and legends; Case study
Eco-education	Personal development	Virtue ethics	Experience and construct the relationship with the environment	Immersion; Life story; Exploration
Sustainability	Shared resource for sustainable living	Consequentialist ethics	Promote social equity and ecological sustainability	Case study; Social marketing

Figure 1 Characterization of Fifteen Socioecological Approaches

Conclusion: Relations with Hart, Moltmann, and *Donghak*

The resulting fifteen socioecological ethics frameworks will not produce absolute and definitive answers or categories to the specific moral dilemmas or issues encountered in eco-ethical research and pedagogical programs, but it would provide an important service by offering an instrument for clarifying and reasoning through the relevant principles and values that bear on problematic moral situations.

Among fifteen frameworks, "holistic," "praxis," and "socially critical" approaches are found in common in Moltmann, Hart, and *Donghak*'s ethics because their thoughts have a strong action-oriented and transformation-valued background. Although the three viewpoints do not have the same time period, they share similar propositions from these approaches.

Critical discussions of these two scholars and one Korean traditional thought's socioecological aspects may arise from several angles. For instance, while Hart and Moltmann have a greater tendency to emphasize a global vision, which leads to a better understanding of the socioecological system from the perspective of "systemic" approach, *Donghak* has a firm inclination toward "bioregionalist" and "ethnographic" approaches because this thought originated from a local traditional religious atmosphere.

From the perspective of praxis approach, when Hart connects socioecological ethics with praxis ethics, he presents his own idea of socioecological praxis ethics. He states that "praxis ethics is not applied ethics; praxis ethics is derived ethics. It is not formulated abstractly, but developed in organic dialogue with social realities." For him, it is evolved not just from the social setting, but from "both that setting and from what has

been brought to the setting, including the ideas, experiences, values, and principles of participants."[200]

Addressing the Christian creation story lived through its Sabbath, Moltmann shows his ecological sustainability: "We are *imago mundi* (image of the world); yet on the other hand, we are *imago Dei* (image of God) because we are called to represent all of life before God.[201] Human beings live in community with the whole created order. Moltmann further develops his sustainable notion in community: "We shall see [humanity] as a microcosm in which all previous creatures are found again, a being that can only exist in community with all other created beings and which can only understand itself in that community."[202]

In chapter five, I have discussed two kinds of religion-related, socioecologically conscious communities that developed in distinct cultures: the Indramang Community in Korea (an indigenous, intentional eco-community); and the Mondragón Cooperative Corporation in Spain (a cooperative, multinational community). I have elaborated, too, socioecological approaches to socioecological wellbeing that are being used for constructing pedagogical programs in multicultural contexts.

While comparing the two communities, I recognized that both *Donghak* and sacramental commons provide us a common perspective that can be represented as "socioecological praxis ethics." Although their socio-historical locations are quite different, both communities teach us the importance of "participation" and "solidarity."

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[200] Hart, *Cosmic Commons*, 189.

[201] Moltmann, *God in Creation*, 190.

[202] Ibid., 186.

Moreover, the pedagogical program may play significant role in defining the communities and movements in multicultural contexts. With this framework I have compared the socioecological consciousness of Moltmann, Hart, and *Donghak*. In fruitful ways, their consciousness has produced diverse conduct in different contexts. Surely, they further offer avenues for more influential inspiration in socioecological dimensions of the emerging socioecologically conscious generations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I asked the question: Could socio-ethical reflection find a commonplace to construct groundwork for dedicated ecological action in *Donghak* and *sacramental commons*? Replying to this, I have shown a comparative socioecological ethics as an ethical method for religion-related communities as they face the challenge of responding to the ecological crisis, especially arising in Korean contexts. The common socioecological understandings on nature in Korean *Donghak* tradition and sacramental commons are "interrelatedness," "interaction," and "transformation." In addition, both have a similar notion of "divine" nature and emphasize the spiritual dimension of the Earth.

From my research, both Korean *Donghak* thought and Christian sacramentality regard contemporary ecological crisis as a matter of consciousness and conduct; therefore, a kind of socioecological praxis ethics should be developed, especially in Korean contexts. I have used the concept of sacramental commons as a hermeneutical tool for adapting and contextualizing the idea of *Donghak* in Korean socioecological location.

According to John Hart, a "sacramental commons" is a place of human experience of divine presence, where people engage the transcendent-immanent Spirit in creation. Church teachings state that "the whole of creation can be sacramental, and the Earth serves as a sacramental commons, a means of grace for the person of faith."[1] Since Hart

[1] John Hart, *Sacramental Commons: Christian Ecological Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 18.

explores the commonality of nature as a locus for spiritual experience across world religions and spiritual traditions, his "creation-centered consciousness" combines science, eco-philosophy, biblical and historical theology, and (American) Indian spirituality. In this dissertation, Hart's interreligious moral pull has been used for a comparative interpretation of Christianity and *Donghak*. I found out that the interrelatedness of humans, nature, and God in the sacramental commons also exists in *Donghak*'s idea of *Shi Chonju*.

In addition, Jürgen Moltmann's pneumatology resembles Hart's idea of sacramental commons as well as *Donghak*'s concept of *Shi Chonju*. He accentuates God's immanence in the world, focusing on the role of Spirit in his trinitarian theology of creation. Leonardo Boff also perceives the importance of interrelatedness among humans, nature, and God as a socioecological aspect of life. As a liberation eco-theologian, Boff is interested in the relationship between economic injustice and ecological deterioration by emphasizing ecojustice in the world.

I have critically reviewed Korean religious systems and Western impacts that have affected Korean environmental thoughts. Most of Korean traditional religions have a reformation concept in common. Historically, Korea has been influenced by Western capitalism, democracy, individualism, and modern civilization for its political and economic development. There has been a conflict between traditional values such as collectivism, authoritarianism, and Confucian principles and Western values such as individualism, rationalism, and egalitarianism. The cultural collision results in the loss of traditional values of respect toward nature and concern for community wellbeing, and consequently produces ecological crisis in Korea. Moreover, fast economic growth with

the economic-growth-first policy in Korea has generated many ecological problems such as abusive land development, the mass production and mass consumption structure, and rapid urbanization and industrialization as examples of unsustainable development.

The Korean environmental movement has developed against the growth-oriented policy and developmental dictatorship to build a sustainable future in Korean society. Although Korean democracy is partially successful in political and systemic aspects, it has failed in social, economic, cultural, and ecological matters. Therefore, as time goes on, the Korean mainstream environmental movement has changed to a different mode such as a life and peace movement that can be called a "socioecological alternative movement." This movement is linked to the Hansalim movement as a pattern of community movement focusing on the transformation of people's daily life, value, consciousness, and culture. The Hansalim movement has evolved as a cooperative and eco-community movement stressing solidarity with and responsibility for local communities. It aims to make a change of life through the creation of consensus, individuals' awakening, and a shift of consciousness.

The Korean minjung's *Han* thought, involved in reconciliation, harmony, and symbiotic holism, respecting Heaven in Confucianism, being present in Buddhism, caring for other beings in Daoism, and acceptance of elements of Christianity, has been fused into *Donghak* thought. Su-woon, the founder of *Donghak*, proposes an eschatological vision which is called *Huchon Gaebyeok* (후천개벽) to lead a new civilization and build an innovative worldview as a socioecological spirituality. With his liberation consciousness and spiritual synthesis, Su-woon connects the past of various religious

ideas to the present of oppressive social situations. His transformative spirituality plays an important role to overcome the time gap between the past and the present.

Even before the influence of Western modernization in Korean society, *Donghak* had developed, and then retained, radical notions that include egalitarian relations with, and liberating and empowering, the minjung; these concepts have been eroded. *Donghak*'s revolutionary thought was a forerunner of socioecological ideas and its openness and social consciousness has affected contemporary Korean ecological spirituality. Thanks to *Donghak*'s spirituality and consciousness, Korean socioecological thoughts might overcome the harm of a Western anthropocentric influence.

In this dissertation, I have introduced an eco-community, the Indramang Community, based on Korean traditional socioecological spirituality and religions. I examined most of Korean traditional religions such as Buddhism, Daoism, and *Donghak* that resisted Western dominant and anthropocentric influences on Earth. In contrast to these foreign forces, they saw nature and humans as being interconnected and interdependent parts of the same whole. However, after the influx of the Western dominant and competitive individualism into Korea, people have lost their traditional socioecological assets. Today, many Koreans want to recover their traditional way of life as a form of cooperative community, such as is embodied in Indramang.

I have proposed socioecological comparative constructs relating the West and the East with two sets of them. One is the relation between *Donghak* and sacramental commons, the other is the association of Moltmann and *Donghak*. In comparative socioecological ethics, the themes of "relational community," "relational consciousness," and "interconnectedness," presented in *Donghak* thought, the sacramental commons of

John Hart, and aspects of Jürgen Moltmann's work, disclose a common interrelatedness among the divine Spirit, humans, and nature. These comparative constructs further show us how socioecological ethics can restore socioecological relationality to a dynamic unity of the divine and the earthly, the infinite and the finite, transcendence and immanence, universality and particularity, and individuality and diversity beyond any time and space gaps.

Shi, one of the main ideas of *Donghak* thought, illustrates "the natural unity of humans and the cosmos," "the social unity of humans with one another," and "the revolutionary unity of humans and society." Su-woon described the meaning of *Shi* with three terms: *Naeyou Silryong*; *Oeyou Kihwa*; and *Kagji Buli*. As a way of ecological spirituality, *Naeyou Silryong* matches Hart's creation-centered spirituality. *Oeyou Kihwa* emphasizes dynamic interrelatedness which creates life in the universe. As a socio-ethical implication and practice of the first and second meanings of *Shi*, *Kagji Buli* accentuates self-awakeness, transformation, and rebirth, bearing a resemblance to Hart's socioecological praxis ethics.

Moltmann's trinitarian pneumatology is similar to *Donghak*'s idea because the Spirit in Moltmann's thought and the ultimate *Ki* in *Donghak* have similar ethical implications in terms of socioecological and communal relations in the world. These notions are interested in the experience of suffering people and the natural world, and share a panentheistic idea as well. From the view of comparative ethics, however, they have different aspects. In Moltmann's thought, there exists distinctive separation between creator and creation, while for Su-woon, the distinction is not so distinguishable. With this comparison, I discerned that *Donghak*'s socioecological spirituality is closer to

pantheism than Moltmann's idea, though both concepts still remain in the field of panentheism.

With a single voice, sacramental commons, Moltmann, and *Donghak* emphasize relational consciousness as well as the role of divine Spirit. Therefore, creation consciousness can perform as a common socioecological vision and become an expected future location in Korean contexts. Creation consciousness rejects any kinds of alienation or isolation because it is a holistic understanding that the divine being, humans, and nature are closely interdependent.

In the dissertation, I prefer to emphasize and analyze the contextual and situational aspects rather than conceptual dimensions. In regard to the vision of practical ethics, I propose a pedagogical program which can differentiate the category of eco-ethical aspects. To build socio-ethical approaches and communal programs in religion-related communities, I have investigated Korean socioecological contexts by utilizing Hart's socioecological praxis ethics of the sacramental commons.

Why does Hart make an effort to build a socioecological praxis ethics? What is the main concern of his current research? He links theory and practice more firmly by focusing on dialogic relation in, instead of separation from, context. In terms of integration between theory and practice, his socioecological praxis ethics is closely related to the concept of *Shi-Chonju* in *Donghak*. Hart emphasizes "ethics-in-context" not "contextual ethics."[2] His understanding of sacramental commons has finally developed to socioecological praxis ethics. It projects more to the future as a form of futuristic ethics

[2] John Hart, *Cosmic Commons: Spirit, Science, and Space* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 188.

because his envisioned "utopia" (an envisioned place and toward which to strive), which is one of his main concerns, has been constantly elaborated and extended.

The socioecological praxis ethics envisions a new way of doing suggested in my dissertation as a pedagogical program and community movement. The pedagogical program offers us a historical overview of the environmental movement as well as criteria for defining the status of any socioecological contexts. This program provides a reference for constructing a socioecological community and performs as an analytical tool kit for its actions.

I deal with *Donghak*'s socioecological spirituality focusing on the ideas of Su-woon, the founder, but including the spirituality further developed by Haewol, the second leader, and Uiam, the third leader. Therefore, the research expects to continue in the future. Especially, I think Haewol's extended idea for overcoming the panentheistic notion of *Donghak* revealed in his concept of *Yang Chonju*, and Uiam's transformational approach for socio-economic structures developed in the notion of *Che Chonju*, should be explored further.

In Korea, the Hansalim socioecological movement further progressed to the idea of life thought and flourished as a structure of community movement such as in the Indramang Community and others. They have grown as regional community movements mostly influenced by ecofriendly religious thought such as is expressed in *Donghak*, Daoism, and others. Originally, the idea of eco-community movement has been introduced by social movement activists. They attempted to reduce the problems of urban life. In addition, they highlighted harmony in nature, participation in community activities, and solidarity with others sharing socioecological spirituality.

The Mondragón Cooperative Corporation is a unique democratic community in Spain. It became an outstanding multinational corporation started from an industrial worker cooperative community. Because the MCC is an integrated network of cooperatives owned by workers by origin, the spirit of participation and solidarity has been emphasized. I recognized that both the Korean Indramang Community and the Spanish MCC emphasize the same principles: participation and solidarity.

We can say that loving agency is displayed in a socioecological context when humans choose to participate within the self-organizing processes of an ecosystem. "Participation" here means to live in a way that does not contribute to the degradation of the ecosystems of which we are a part. This is analogous in many ways to the kind of participation in the common good of society that we are called to by God's grace. Participation can be interpreted in terms of dialectical identity, agency, and presence that are mediated by spiritual union with the divine beings. When we know, act, and are "in the Spirit," we become participants in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). This dialectical participation between divine and human transforms us as our relationality—with God, humans, and nature—is intensified in the presence of the Spirit. This transformation by the Spirit is life-giving consciousness.

When we are integrated in an ecologically healthy manner into nature, we participate in the life-giving agency of the Spirit. To participate in the Spirit in this way is to be in a loving mode that links us to God's love. Precisely because our experiences of love are grounded in a variety of ways of participating in divine love, there is a fundamental ineffability about true love. We are faced by it, we participate in it, we are transformed by it, but we cannot define it any more than we can define God or

Hanulnim.[3] It is the infinite life of love that serves as the inner condition of human experiences of love. To be aligned with life-rhythms—to participate in the self-organizing energy flows of a network of ecosystems in an ecologically healthy manner—is to participate in divine loving relationality. Likewise, when we are indwelt by the divine Spirit of love, the relational structures that inhibit justice and wholeness in the natural world are also brought to light and transformed as our relational behavior takes on the characteristics of love.[4] The natural world itself is not changed, only the way that we relate within it individually and communally.

Lisa Sideris suggests that one way of facilitating this kind of participation in nature practically is through the practice of bioregionalism, which encourages people to learn the "logic" of their local places.[5] In doing so, bioregionalism points us in the direction of proper participation. According to Gary Snyder, a proponent of the practice, "it is not enough just to 'love nature'…Our relation to the natural world takes place in a place, and it must be grounded in information and experience."[6] Because our identity is shaped in part by our place, our identity will be tied intrinsically to the way we live in that place. This is true not only of the way we live with and for the others of a locality (both human

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[3] James Nash, *Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 141.

[4] Ibid., 149.

[5] See in Robert L. Thayer Jr., *Lifeplace: Bioregional Thought and Practice* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 81.

[6] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild: Essays* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 39.

and nonhuman), but also the degree to which we act to promote the sustainability and wellbeing of the locality itself.[7]

In recent years, many people are discovering the eco-community movement as an alternative to the social problems of human alienation and ecological crisis caused by modern capitalism. Scholars emphasized the importance of social, ecological, and spiritual dimensions, as a characteristic of eco-communities. Each dimension of eco-communities is tied to a number of specific tasks that have been suggested. This indicated that we need to analyze the reality of eco-communities and to seek the tasks for its future from the perspective of socioecological ethics. Examining such a reality and constructing a practical program have been a primary aim of this dissertation.

Recently, the Doorae Community in the mountain Jiri and the Hanmaum Community in Jangseong, Cholla province have come to be regarded as popular models for the Christian eco-community movement in Korea. They pursue harmony among God, humans, and nature on the basis of Christian faith. For the development of the Christian eco-communities, it is important to have a solid theological foundation and solve the practical problems. In general, the Christian eco-communities are grounded on the basis of ecological theology and ethics, the theology of community, and socioecological spirituality.

In these communities, five practical tasks for Christian eco-communities in Korea are suggested. First, it is necessary to include religious ceremonies and to equip the educational program for ecological and communal consciousness. Second, efforts should be made to find a sustainable lifestyle in the areas of ecological food, clothes, shelter, and

[7] Ibid., 43.

energy forms. Third, to achieve economic independence, it is necessary to improve communities' competitiveness in organic agricultural products as well as various eco-cultural commercial items.[8] Fourth, democratic leadership needs to be developed to resolve conflicts among the community members. Finally, each community should be more open toward other local communities and the local government by way of networking. In doing so, current Christian eco-communities pay much attention to participation and solidarity.

Donghak, John Hart, and Jürgen Moltmann have brought together core elements of the preceding dissertation chapters. They highlight unequivocally the importance of conduct and practice based on socioecological consciousness. Even though they have different backgrounds—*Donghak* originated in a Korean context at the end of the19th Century; Jürgen Moltmann in Europe since the 1960s (*Theology of Hope*, 1967); and John Hart in the U.S. since the 1980s (*The Spirit of the Earth: A Theology of the Land*, 1984)—they share similar socioecological notions. Their transnational, transcultural, and transcendental understandings for socioecological contexts around the world have produced significant insights and teachings, and will be beneficial for improving global socioecological consciousness and conduct and thereby have a continuing positive impact throughout Earth and in the Cosmic commons.

[8] Hansalim, *Hansalim Seoneon* (Hansalim Manifesto) (Seoul: Hansalim Press, 1989), 34.

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