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Research Background and Necessity

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Introduction to Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought

Donghak Thought (東學思想)

- A Korean indigenous religious thought founded in 1860 by Choe Je-u (Suun).
- The name "Donghak (東學)" corresponds to the West's "Seohak (西學)" and pursues the East's indigenous
- modernity; in response to material-centered Western modernity, it presents ethical reflection and religious philosophy.
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Seeking an ideational fusion of East and West as a philosophical thinking methodology.



Daesoon Thought (大巡思想)

A system of thought as "True Donghak (參東學)" systematized by Kang Jeungsan (1871-1909).

- The succession and development of Donghak from the view that "the one who wrought Disorder (作亂) was Suun (水雲), and the one who brings Order (治亂) is Jeungsan (甌山)."
- A philosophical attempt to resolve and complete the problematic raised by Donghak.
- Further systematizing the philosophical thinking methodology of indigenous modernity.
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The Concept of the East's Indigenous Modernity

Definition of Indigenous Modernity

A modern structure of thought and worldview that developed on its own from the cultural and philosophical foundations within the East, rather than being based on foreign Western ideas.

Indigenous Modernity in Donghak and Daesoon Thought

- The concept of 'Donghak (東學)' as contrasted with 'Seohak (西學)'.humanity and nature
- A new system of thought expanded from the Confucian tradition.
- Redefining 'Hak (學, learning)' as a philosophical thinking methodology; Daesoon
- Thought systematizes indigenous modernity as its 'True Donghak'.

Western Modernity vs. Eastern Indigenous Modernity

Material-centered civilization vs. a focus on humanism and ethical reflection

Emphasis on instrumental reason vs. the pursuit of harmony between

Separation of nature and humanity vs. the thought of the unity of Heaven, Earth and Humanity (天地人)

Individual-centered rationality vs. communal Sangsaeng (相生) and the Later Heaven Gaebyeok (後天開闢)

“ The Contemporary Significance of Indigenous Modernity

"Although Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought have been studied in various respects as indigenous modernity, existing research has lacked study of the Eastern philosophical thinking methodology premised on the name 'Donghak' — that is, the Eastern and Korean philosophical thinking methodology."

The Eastern Origins of Western Modernity

The Rediscovery of Western Modernity · Key Researchers

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) transmitted Eastern civilization to the West.



The Confucian ethical system and mode of thinking influenced the Western Enlightenment.



With the development of IT, the Eastern origins of Western modernity are being re-examined.

Eastern Scholars

- ◆ Zhu Qianzhi (朱謙之) — Europe's Modernity Made by China
- ◆ Hwang Tae-yeon — A General Theory of Confucian Modernity
- ◆ Jo Hye-in, Jeon Hong-seok, Lee Young-jae, Lee Dong-hee, and others

Western Scholars

- ◆ Andre Gunder Frank — ReOrient; John Hobson — The Eastern
- ◆ Origins of Western Civilisation
- ◆ Herrlee G. Creel, Adolf Reichwein, and others

"Confucianism, identified in the East as an obstacle to modernization, was, on the contrary, the origin of modernity in the West."

The Importance of Alternative Modernity

The Crisis of Western Modern Civilization

-  A crisis of human extinction due to the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons
-  A global crisis due to environmental pollution and climate change
-  The imbalance between material-centered modernity and technological development
-  A weakening of communal consciousness and an absence of ethical reflection

The Alternative Modernity of Donghak and Daesoon Thought

-  Presenting a harmonious worldview of matter and spirit
-  Ethical values in which humanity and nature coexist
-  A fusion of Eastern and Western thought and a mutually complementary approach
-  A reconstruction of modernity grounded in religious reflection

"Contemporary thinkers are seeking an alternative modernity in ethical reflection and a religious return."

"Postmodernist thinkers who have prepared an alternative modernity through post-modernity discourse are also, like indigenous modernity, seeking an alternative to modernity in ethical reflection and a religious return."

The Philosophical Thinking Methodology of Donghak and Daesoon Thought

East-West Convergent Thought

- ◆ Dongdo-seogi theory (東道西器論): harmonizing the Eastern Dao with Western technology.
- ◆ Jungche-seoyong theory (中體西用論): applying Western methods on a foundation of East Asian values.
- ◆ 'Donghak (東學)' as an indigenous modernity responding to Seohak (西學).

The East Asian Logical System

- ◆ A system of thought based on Yin-Yang and the Five Phases (陰陽五行).
- ◆ The characteristics of correlative thought (correlative thinking).
- ◆ A system of multiple causality, differing from the linear causality of Western science.

Expanding the Meaning of 'Hak (學)'

- ◆ The East Asian characteristic of understanding religion as 'Hak (學)'.
- ◆ The foundation of basic system values.
- ◆ It discusses the problem of the mind (心) yet is oriented toward resolving real-world problems.
- ◆ The self-cultivation dimension of Donghak and the identity of Korean humanities.

Significance for the Philosophy of Science

- ◆ Points of contact with modern philosophy of science such as Bachelard, Lacan, and Foucault.
- ◆ Re-evaluation of traditional views of science such as earth, water, fire, and wind (地水火風).
- ◆ The concepts of the epistemological break (Epistemological Break) and the paradigm.
- ◆ An alternative system of thought that complements the limitations of the Western view of science.

Significance and Conclusion of the Study

Significance of the Study

- Discovering the potential contribution of the philosophical thinking methodology of Donghak and Daesoon Thought to contemporary scholarship.
- Building a foundation for seeking an alternative modernity beyond Western-centered modernity.
- Providing a methodological basis for dialogue and mutual understanding between Eastern and Western philosophy.
- Laying the scholarly groundwork for the globalization of Korean humanities and philosophy.

Conclusion

The indigenous modernity and philosophical thinking methodology contained in Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought offer important insight into the global crisis brought about by today's material-centered Western modern civilization.

By illuminating both its philosophical and practical significance, this study presents the potential contribution of Korean thought to building a future alternative civilization. In particular, by reviving the original meaning of 'Hak (學)', it is expected to offer a new perspective on the direction of modern scholarship and human civilization.