

(b) The Eastern Transformative-Contact (接化的) View of Humanity

The Eastern Transformative Contact View of Humanity

Comparison of Eastern and Western Views of Humanity

Western View of Humanity / Eastern View of Humanity

Emphasizes the Heaven above Heaven (transcendent being)

Separation and opposition between humans and God/nature

A perspective of conquest and domination over nature

An existential consciousness that values personal growth and achievement

Emphasizes the Heaven within Heaven (immanent being)

Emphasizes the human's mediating role between Heaven and Earth (天地)

Pursuit of harmony and interaction with nature

Emphasis on the consciousness of concern that participates in the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth

Fundamental Difference

The Eastern transformative-contact View of Humanity is grounded in correlative thinking. Whereas the West sees Heaven and Earth as objects to be utilized through human ability, the East sees Heaven and Earth as having endowed humans with their abilities, so that humans are beings who must repay Heaven and Earth for their grace.

A fundamental difference in perceiving the relationship between humans and the universe

The Eastern Transformative Contact

Correlative Thinking and Fractal Structure

What is Eastern correlative thinking?

It is a mode of thought in which parts and whole are interconnected and all elements of the universe are mutually related. Heaven, Earth, and humanity are seen not as separate entities but as an interconnected system.

Emphasizes the organic connectedness of part and whole

Grasps humanity not as separate from Heaven and Earth (天地) but in a correlative relationship

A holistic mode of thought contrasting with Western analytic and reductive thinking



Shim Gwang-hyeon's Fractal Theory / Yin-Yang and the Five Phases and Fractal Structure

Self-similarity, in which the whole structure repeats within the parts

A "fractal" is the repetition of the same structure however complex

Defines the characteristics of Korean culture as a fractal structure

The Yin-Yang and Five Phases structure of Heaven exists identically in Earth and humanity

The universe is a repetition of yin and yang, like the repetition of 0 and 1

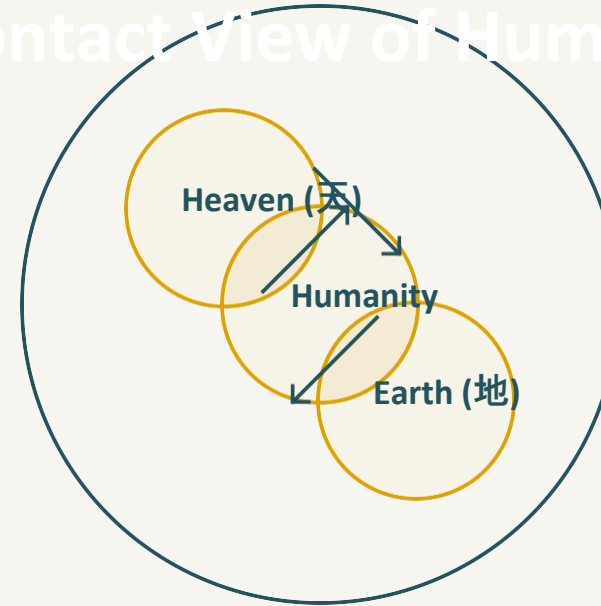
If one knows the structure of the human, one can also grasp the principles of Heaven and Earth

The Eastern Transformative-Contact View of Humanity

The Concept of the Transformative-Contact View of Humanity

What is Transformative Contact (接化)?

Transformative contact means that Heaven and Earth (the universe) and humanity are interconnected and interact with each other. In Eastern thought, humans are viewed not as beings separate from Heaven and Earth but, from an integrated perspective, as existing together with Heaven and Earth as part of the universe.



A being in whom the vital force of Heaven and Earth is concentrated

Humans are beings endowed with the finest gi (氣) of Heaven and Earth

Humanity is that into which the gi of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases flowed to become the very essence (精髓)

Humans are mediators possessing all the attributes of Heaven and Earth

The duty to participate in the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth

The human duty is to participate in the transformative nurturing (化育) of Heaven and Earth

Heaven and Earth nurture humanity through sincerity, reverence, and faith (誠敬信)

Humans are beings who repay Heaven and Earth through sincerity, reverence, and faith

The Eastern Transformative

The Meaning of the and Sincerity (誠)

The Meaning of the Transformative Nurturing of Heaven and Earth (天地化育) and Sincerity (誠)

The gi (氣) of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases flows through Heaven and Earth; the finest becomes humans and the dregs become things

Humans, receiving the vital force of Heaven and Earth, possess a nature (性), and must fulfill this nature to repay Heaven and Earth

A relationship in which Heaven and Earth nurture humanity through sincerity, reverence, and faith

誠敬(信), and humanity repays through sincerity, reverence, and faith

惟天下之誠，爲能盡其性，能盡其性，則能盡天之性，能盡天之性，則能盡物之性，能盡物之性，則可以贊天地之化育，可以贊天地之化育，則可以與天地參。

(Only one who practices utmost sincerity in the world can fully realize his own nature... can assist the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth, and thereby participate together with Heaven and Earth.)

— the Doctrine of the Mean (中庸), Chapter 22

The Eastern Concept of Sincerity (誠)

The creative interaction between Heaven and Earth and humanity

The ground for humanity's participation in the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth

The fundamental principle connecting Heaven and Earth with humanity

Whitehead's Creativity

The ultimate category in the philosophy of organism

Contrasts with the 'Absolute' of Western monist philosophy

A concept closer to Eastern philosophy than to West Asia



The Creative Cycle of Heaven, Earth and Humanity (天地人)

Heaven and Earth generate humanity (生人), and humanity [participates] in the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth

The Eastern Transformative

Contemporary Reevaluation and Research Trends

East-West Exchange and Modern Rediscovery

In the course of Western modernization, the Eastern transformative-contact View of Humanity, once dismissed as a pre-modern object of enlightenment, is being reevaluated in various respects through East-West exchange. In particular, research reinterpreting correlative thinking from the perspective of modern scholarship is actively underway.

Key Researchers and Research Achievement Trends

Choe In-cheol / Jo Geung-ho

Joint research with Nisbett

Demonstrating Eastern correlative cognition from a cognitive-psychological perspective

Proving collectivism/individualism differences through psychological experiments

Research on the system of Eastern psychology

Establishing a Confucian psychology that grasps parts from the whole

A psychological interpretation of the holistic concept of the Mean

Jo Ok-gu

Research from a language-pedagogy perspective

Comparing the Thousand Character Classic with modern education

Suggesting the possibility that Eastern correlative thinking could become an alternative science

Park Jae-ju / Comprehensive research centered on Whitehead's thought

Presenting a comprehensive account of the correlative system of thought

Research on the meeting of Eastern and Western worldviews and ethics

The Modern Meaning of Eastern Thought

A stage in which Eastern correlative thinking is being scientifically proven through advances in cognitive science and psychology

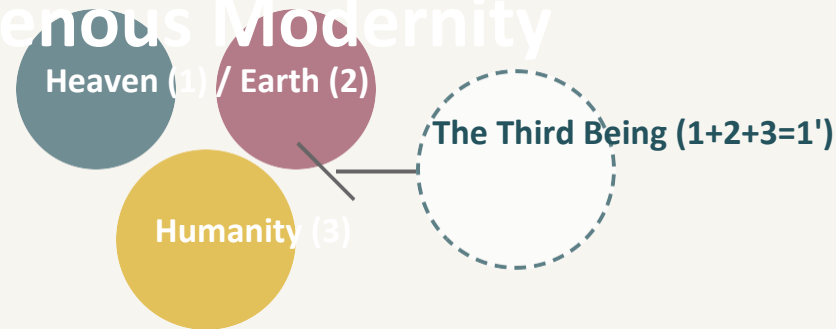
Providing a foundation for seeking a harmonious relationship between humans and nature in a modern society facing ecological crisis and environmental problems

The Eastern Transformative Contact

Liminality Theory and Indigenous Modernity

What is Liminality?

In Lee Young-ran's theory of liminality, the human being is a being of boundary and transition, possessing the potential to change from one state to another.



The Transformative-Contact Character of Humanity and Its Potential for Change

The mathematical connectivity of Heaven (1), Earth (2), and Humanity (3) (Lee Young-ran's interpretation)

Humans are capable of self-transformation through the yin and yang (hon and baek) endowed by Heaven and Earth

Humans play the role of the 'knowing person' (知人) who understands the cosmic performance of the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth

Furthermore, humans must develop into beings who perform within the universe

The Western Impact and Indigenous Modernity

Though Eastern thought was challenged by the impact of Western modernization, through it the East instead came to seek an indigenous modernity. In this context, liminality theory becomes a theoretical foundation preparing for the realization of an ideal View of Humanity.

The Eastern Transformative-Contact View of Humanity

The Modern Meaning of the Eastern Transformative-Contact View of Humanity

Reconstructing the fragmented View of Humanity of modern society into an integrated, relational perspective

A philosophical foundation for re-establishing a harmonious relationship between humans and nature in an age of ecological crisis

An alternative system of thought for resolving human alienation in a technology-centered society

Conclusion and Implications: Modern Applications and Implications of the Transformative-Contact View of Humanity

Environment and Ecology: Forming a sustainable environmental ethic through recognizing the mutually reciprocal relationship between Heaven and Earth and humanity. Overcoming the ecological crisis by restoring a coexistent relationship between Heaven and Earth and humanity rather than a human-centered one.

Education and Character Development

Developing an integrated educational methodology through correlative thinking. Character education that values harmonious relationships with community and nature over individual achievement.

Technology and Philosophy of Science

Seeking a new scientific paradigm through fractal theory and correlative thinking. Presenting an ethical direction in which technological development can contribute to the transformative nurturing of Heaven and Earth.

Final Implications

The Eastern transformative-contact View of Humanity is not merely a reproduction of past thought but, as an alternative view of humanity and the world for overcoming the crisis of modern civilization, can become a foundation for establishing new relationships between humans and nature, and between humans and the universe. 2025.06.21