

Chapter IV

Daesoon Thought's Indigenous Modernity and the Revitalization of Order (治亂)

Indigenous Modernity and the Revitalization of Order in Daesoon

Research Overview and Purpose

Through Daesoon Thought, this study examines the indigenous modernity of the history of modern Korean thought and the religious solution to the problem of Order and Disorder (治亂).

The main significance of the study lies in re-illuminating the standing of Daesoon Thought within Korean religious thought and in analyzing its structure of thought centered on the view of the Three Realms (Samgye).

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Comparison of Daesoon Thought and Donghak Thought

Donghak Thought / Daesoon Thought

- Presents only the appearance of the transcendent Heaven (symbolic) • Sangje's Advent in Human Form (人身降世, substantive intervention)
- The concept of spirits (divine beings, 神明) is only partially reflected • The realm of divine beings is systematized into a concrete system
- Centered on this-worldly salvation (protecting the nation and bringing peace to the people) • Resolving the grievances of the Three Realms centered on Haewon and Boeun
- At the stage of suggesting the possibility of a sacred-profane boundary • Completing the integration of that boundary through Advent in Human Form and the realm of divine beings

The Concept of Advent in Human Form (人身降世)

The phenomenon in which the Supreme Lord of the Ninth Heaven (九天上帝) descends directly into the world in a human body

- The substantiation of a transcendent being — Heaven (the Ninth Heaven) is born as a human and, from the human standpoint, sees Heaven and Earth as they are and refashions them

- Difference from Donghak — Donghak remained at revelation and appearance, whereas Daesoon extends to a direct advent in human form
- The way of refashioning all things of Heaven and Earth — remaking Heaven and Earth to lay the framework for the Later Heaven Gaebyeok (後天開闢)

"When Sangje was in the Ninth Heaven, the holy sages, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas appealed that none but Sangje could set right the Heaven and Earth fallen into chaos... and so He resolved to descend into the world Himself."

— the Jeon-gyeong (典經)

Characteristics of the View of the Heavenly Realm (天界觀)

-tem • Samgye (三界, the Three Realms): an organic system of the realm of divine beings composed of the Heavenly, Earthly, and Human Realms — a sys-

The 'Heaven above Heaven' structure — nine or more overlapping layers of the Heavenly Realm •

The process • The Heavenly Realm is where divine beings (Buddhas, bodhisattvas, holy sages, etc.) gather and disperse (會散) and receive commands (聽令)
A realm where divine beings (Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and others) gather-and-disperse and receive commands

The old Heaven and the new Heaven — the mutability and revitalization of the Heavenly Realm •

• Systematizing the structure of interaction between the realm of divine beings and the human realm

Passage from the Jeon-gyeong (典經)

"The old Heaven has looked only upon the work of killing people. Hereafter all daily necessities will be exhausted and life will become impossible; if it is not now remade, it cannot go on."



The Meaning of Indigenous Modernity

Differentiation from Western Modernity

- An ontological expansion from material-centered Western modernity to one centered on the Three Realms of Heaven and Earth and the harmony of divine beings
- Instead of the West's total negation that "God is dead," a mode of *gajong* (加宗) that inherits and develops
- Aims to overcome the ills of modern civilization brought about by Matteo Ricci

An Independent Pattern of Development

- Indigenous transformative thought that transcends nationalist limits and the imitation of the West
- The completed form of the rearrangement of the sacred-profane boundary and of liminality (the boundary state)
- The establishment of a metaphysical modernity and post-modern system through the substantive Advent in Human Form
- Overcoming Western-Eastern dualism through the substantiation of the divine beings of Heaven and Earth

Comparison of Indigenous Modernity and Western Modernity

Category / Western Modernity / The	Indigenous Modernity of Daesoon Thought
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The Concept and Principles of Order and Disorder (治亂)

The Grievances of the Three Realms and the Cycle of Order and Disorder

- Through the mutual conflict (Sanggeuk) of the Former Heaven, grievances accumulate in the Three Realms (Heavenly, Earthly, and Human)
The outbreak of disorder (亂): the disruption of order in the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity and the continual growth of grievances
The process of transition from disorder (亂) to order (治) through the Reordering Work of Heaven and Earth and the Reordering Work of the Three Realms

The Core Principles of Order and Disorder

- Haewon (解冤): the fundamental principle of resolving age-old grievances and enmities (隻)
Boeun (報恩): the practice of repaying grace to lay the foundation of mutual life-giving
Sangsaeng (相生, mutual life-giving): building the Later Heaven paradise through mutual coexistence and harmony



The Revitalization Process of Order and Disorder

The Reordering Work of Heaven and Earth (天地公事)

- The remaking of the old Heaven and Earth — the reorganization of the structure of the universe
 - Direct intervention and refashioning through Sangje's Advent in Human Form
 - The simultaneous re-establishment of order in the realm of divine beings and the human realm
 - Building a new order of Heaven and Earth through the Later Heaven Gaebyeok
- "Now I have remade Heaven and remade Earth, weaving the cosmic degrees so tightly that not a drop can leak; as each returns to its appointed measure, a new framework will open." — the Jeon-gyeong (典經)

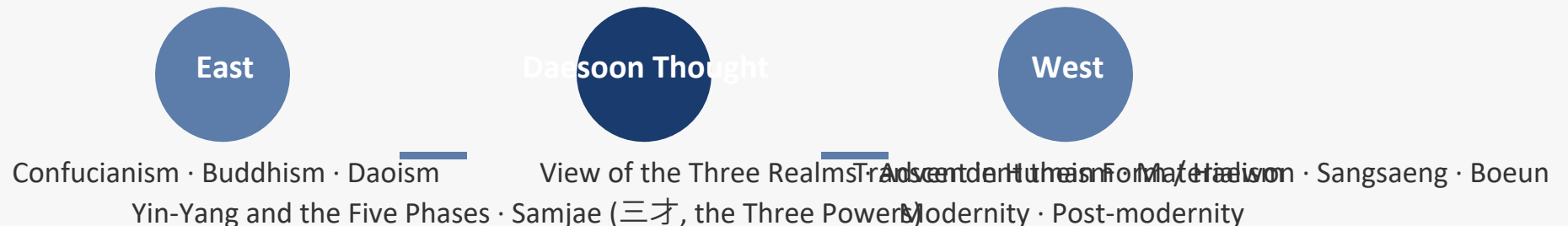
The Realization of the Reordering Work of the Three Realms (三界公事)

- 1 The Reordering Work of the Underworld (冥府公事): adjusting the mutual relationship between the Heavenly and Earthly Realms
- 2 Haewon (解冤) and Boeun (報恩): resolving the grievances of the Three Realms and establishing a new order
- 3 Divine-human harmony (神人調和): the organic union of the realm of divine beings and the human realm
- 4 The building of the paradise (仙境): the realization of Heaven on Earth and the completion of order (治)

An Integrative Perspective on Eastern and Western Thought

The Integration of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism (儒佛仙) and the Reception of Western Thought

- Substantiating and integrating the metaphysical principles of the three traditional teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism
- Systematically revitalizing Eastern cosmology such as Yin-Yang and the Five Phases, Wonhyeong-ijeong (元亨利貞), and the Twelve Stages of Fortune
- Reinterpreting, from an independent perspective, the materialism and transcendence of modern Western thought
- Establishing a system of indigenous modernity and post-modernity distinct from Western modernity



Modern Significance and Prospects

Value in Modern Society

- Providing the practical principles of Haewon and Sangsaeng for resolving conflict and achieving social integration in a pluralistic society
- Presenting a model of harmonious coexistence among humanity, nature, and the realm of divine beings beyond material-centered Western modernity
- Establishing an alternative worldview and system of cultivation for the spiritual crisis and alienation of modern people

Future Prospects and Implications

- The potential to apply the integrated view of life of the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity in responding to the ecological and environmental crisis
- Forming the basis for a new discourse on spirituality (靈性) that harmonizes with scientific and technological progress
- Building a Korean paradigm for the integration of and dialogue between Eastern and Western thought and religion

Conclusion and Future Tasks

Research Achievements

- Elucidating the characteristics of the indigenous modernity of Daesoon Thought's View of the Heavenly Realm based on Advent in Human Form
- Deriving, through comparison with Donghak Thought, the independent development of the Views of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity
- The systematic reconstruction of the view of the Three Realms (Heavenly, Earthly, and Human) and the systematization of the substantial realm of divine beings

The Significance of the Revitalization of Order and Disorder

- Presenting a model of the great transition from disorder (亂) to order (治) through the principles of Haewon, Boeun, and Sangsaeng
- Establishing a Korean system of modern and post-modern thought differentiated from Western modernity

Future Tasks

- Research on practical ways to apply Daesoon Thought to the problems of modern society