



Chapter V

A Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought

A Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of Donghak and Daesoon

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Research Background and Purpose

- A comparison of the characteristics of the indigenous modernity of Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought
 - Its importance in the discourse of East Asian modernity
 - The context of ideological and social reception and transformation
- **The principle of Liminality: ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny**
- The point of contact between Eastern and Western modernity discourses and the characteristics of Korean modernity
- A study of ideological characteristics through the comparison of worldview structures



Donghak Thought

- **Comparative analysis of core concepts**

- Contrasting the key terms of the View of Heaven (天觀), the View of Earth (地觀), and the View of Humanity (人觀)
- Samjae (三才) and Samgye (三界), Former Heaven and Later Heaven, gihwa and jori, and so on

Cheonoecheon (天外天) · Innaecheon (人乃天)

Gaebyeok : revolutionary
character

- **Understanding the development of thought through the principle of Liminality**

- Linking the two thoughts through the principle that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny

Daesoon Thought

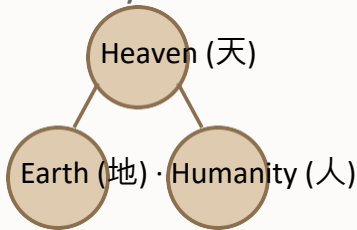
- **A parallel comparison of doctrinal and social forms of practice**

Samgye · Harmony of the Divine
and the Human; the Later Heaven
Gaebyeok · integrativeness

Comparison of the View of Heaven ①: Samjae (三才) vs. Samgye (三界)

Donghak Thought

Samjae (三才): Heaven, Earth, Humanity



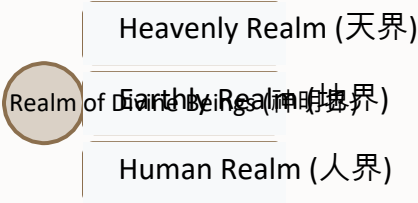
- **Emphasis on the concept of Cheonoecheon (天外天)**
- Centered on an attributive perspective
- Emphasis on the harmony of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity within Samjae
- The basis of a revolutionary egalitarian thought

VS



Daesoon Thought

Samgye (三界): the Heavenly Realm, the Earthly Realm, the Human Realm



- **Introduction and emphasis of the Realm of Divine Beings (神明界)**
- Presenting a substantive, systematic worldview
- An integrative perspective of attribute and substance
- The oversight (統察) and regulation of the Ninth Heaven (九天)

Taegeuk
emblem

Comparison of the View of Heaven ②: Former Heaven (先天) vs. Later Heaven (後天)

Donghak Thought

Doro-seoncheon (道路先天)



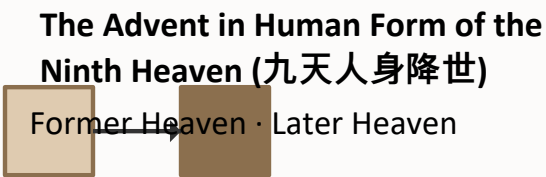
- The distinction between Former and Later Heaven is unclear
- **Doro-seoncheon - a view of time as a return to the origin**
- "Gaebyeok Again" means a return to the age of Yao and Shun
- A perception of the age centered on a Confucian worldview

VS



Daesoon Thought

the Later Heaven Gaebyeok (後天開闢)



- A clear division of Former and Later Heaven based on the Advent in Human Form (人身降世)
- The Later Heaven Gaebyeok - the occasion for a total transformation of worldview
- Bringing about a change in the status of the Realm of Divine Beings and the Human Realm
- The concordance (合德) of Eastern and Western views of Heaven and a future-oriented modernity

Taegeuk emblem

Comparison of the View of Earth ①: Gihwa (氣化) vs. Jori (調理)

Donghak Thought

Gihwa (氣化): the transformation of qi



The natural transformation of qi (氣)

- **Emphasis on the natural flow of qi (氣)**
- Valuing the essential attributes and transformation of the earth
- Natural change grounded in an organic worldview
- Noimugong (勞而無功): effort and cultivation

VS



Daesoon Thought

Jori (調理): principle and law



The regulation of order and balance

- **Emphasis on principle (理)-centered law and order**
- A structural worldview connected to the **Taegeuk emblem** Realm of Divine Beings
- The tuning and balance of Heaven and Earth (天地)
- The Accomplishment of Heaven and Earth (天地成功): outcome-centered

Comparison of the View of Earth (地觀) ②: The Meaning of Land and Earth (土)

- The status of Earth (土) in Yin-Yang and the Five Phases (陰陽五行)

- Traditionally, Earth (土) is the center of the Five Phases and symbolizes stability
- Both Donghak and Daesoon treat it as important, but their approaches differ

Donghak Thought / Daesoon Thought



- The role of Earth within an organic worldview
- In Donghak Thought, Earth is recognized as part of the cycle



- The deepened development of an Earth (土)-centered cosmology
- Earth's centrality as the criterion of the completeness of the Five Phases (五行具備)

- Daesoon Thought's Earth (土)-centrism and the expansion of its worldview

- The concretization of the connection of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity (天地人) through Earth (土)
- Emphasis on the concordance of yin and yang (陰陽合德) and the principle of the mutual generation of the Five Phases (相生)

Comparison of the View of Humanity ①: Innaecheon (人乃天) vs. the Harmony of the Divine and the Human (神人調和)

Donghak Thought

Innaecheon (人乃天): the human being is Heaven



- The foundation of egalitarian thought
- Hanullim (the Heavenly Lord) dwells within every human being
- Emphasis on human agency and revolutionary character
- Oriented toward Boguk-anmin (輔國安民, aiding the nation and bringing peace to the people)

VS



Daesoon Thought

Sinin-johwa (神人調和): the harmony of the divine and the human



- The practical principle of Haewon-sangsaeng
Taeguk
- Emphasis on the harmony of the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity
- The interaction of humanity and divine beings (神明)
- Seongsajaein (成事在人): the decision rests with humans

Comparison of the View of Humanity ②: Haewon, Sangsaeng, and the Human Role

- A comparison of the social practice of the human role

Donghak Thought / Daesoon Thought

Boguk-anmin (輔國安民): aiding the nation and its people and keeping them safe / Haewon-sangsaeng (解冤相生): the harmony of resolving grievances and living together

Egalitarian thought: emphasizing the fundamental equality of all humans / Centered on Gongsu (公事): the elevation of the human role through the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth

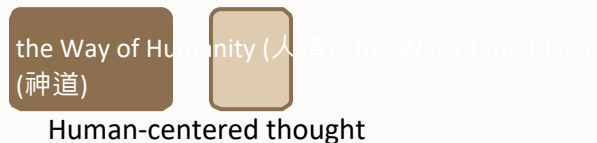
Collective revolutionary practice: expressed in the Donghak Peasant Movement / Solving personal and real-world problems: building the Later Heaven world through practice

- Differences in the modern modes of expressing human agency
 - Donghak: Buryeon-giyeon (不然其然, "it is not so, yet it is so") - a mystical and passive aspect is present. The Boguk emblem
 - Daesoon: Seongsu-jaein (成事在人, "the success of a matter rests with humans") - emphasizing agency and praxis
- The forms in which indigenous modernity is realized
 - Donghak: realizing modernity through social-revolutionary transformation
 - Daesoon: oriented toward an integrative modernity through harmony with the Realm of Divine Beings

Conceptual Contrast: the Way of the Divine / the Way of Humanity, Dogijangjon / Sangsaeng

Donghak Thought

Centered on the Way of Humanity (人道);
Dogijangjon (道器長存)



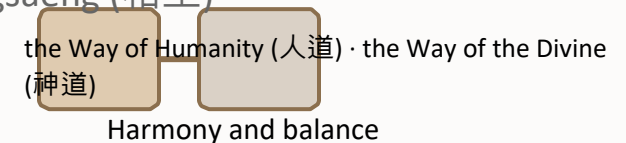
- **Emphasis on a perspective centered on the Way of Humanity**
- Attending to human equality rather than mysticism
- **Dogijangjon: the Dao dwells within the vessel**
- Emphasis on the preservation and permanence of the Dao (道)

VS



Daesoon Thought

Harmony of the Way of the Divine and the
Way of Humanity; oriented toward
Sangsaeng (相生)



- **Emphasis on the harmony of the Way of the Divine and the Way of Humanity**
- The integrative role of the Realm of Divine Beings and the Human Realm
- **Sangsaeng (相生): the principle of mutually giving life**
- A mode of problem-solving through coexistence and harmony

Yin-Yang and the Five Phases and the Reinterpretation of Worldview

- The reconstruction of worldview on the basis of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases

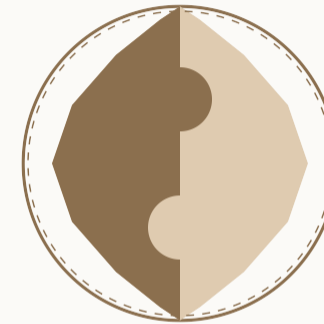
- Both Donghak and Daesoon revitalize, in a contemporary way, the traditional interpretation of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases

Donghak Thought



- The expansion of yin-yang theory through the concept of Cheonoecheon (天外天)
- **A yin-yang-centered interpretation rather than the interaction of the Five-Phase elements**

Daesoon Thought



- **Emphasis on the concordance of yin and yang (陰陽合德) and the completeness of the Five Phases (五行具備), including the Realm of Divine Beings**
- Valuing the balance of yin and yang and the total harmony of the Five Phases

- Interpreting the worldview through the mutual generation (相生) and mutual conflict (相剋) of the Five Phases (五行)

Taegeuk emblem

The Social and Religious Practice of Each Thought

Donghak Thought

- **Oriented toward social revolution - the Gabo Peasant War and a direct social-transformation movement**
- Religious practice centered on cultivation and incantation - the Yeongbu (talisman) and the 21-character incantation
- A community movement centered on the Doin (道人, practitioners) - ~~the abolition of the caste system~~
- Enacting an egalitarian thought centered on the nation and the people
- Establishing religious authority through mysticism and revelation

Daesoon Thought

- The practice of Haewon and Sangsaeng - a fundamental remaking of the ~~world through~~ the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth
- An integrated Confucian-Buddhist-Daoist system of cultivation - the ~~time-bound~~ Reordering Works (時限付公事)
- **The integrative practice of the Realm of Divine Beings and the Human Realm - the union of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity**
- Practice through the modes of Podeok (布德, spreading virtue), Gyohwa (教化, edification), and Sudo (修道, cultivation)
- **Oriented toward Dotong-jingyeong for the building of the Later Heaven Paradise (仙境); Taegeuk emblem**

Overall Features and Conclusion

Comparative perspective / Donghak Thought / Daesoon Thought	
View of Heaven (天觀): revolutionary egalitarian thought, centered on Cheonbecheon (道路先天)	thecheon, oriented toward (三界), the conclusion of the Realm of Divine Beings; oriented toward the Later Heaven Gaebyeok (後天開闢)
View of Earth (地觀): centered on gihwa (氣化), an organic worldview; Noimogong (勞而無功)	theaccomplishment of the Accomplishment of Heaven and Earth (天地成功)
View of Humanity (人觀): Innaecheon (人乃天) thought, collective revolutionary practice	theharmony of the Divine and the Human (神人調和); the practice of Haewon-sangsaeng (解冤相生)
Characteristics of modernity: a transcendent-Heaven thought, a social-revolutionary modernity	theancient modernity; oriented toward reform within a worldview; a creative modernity of harmony and Sangsaeng

Taegeuk emblem. Both Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought are thoughts that, grounded in the traditional thought of East Asia, built an indigenous modernity in response to Western modernity; yet whereas Donghak pursued a revolutionary, social modernity through a transcendent view of Heaven and egalitarian thought, Daesoon Thought, through the introduction of Samgye and the Realm of Divine Beings, the integration of substance and attribute, and the revitalization of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases, orients itself toward an integrative, harmonious modernity — a distinctiveness it

References and Q&A

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Regarding "A Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of Donghak Thought and Daesoon Thought,"
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