

V · Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of Donghak and Daesoon

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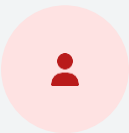
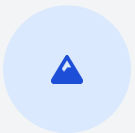
Comparison of Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationships

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Research Purpose and Significance

Statement of the Problem and Research Significance



Research Background and Academic Importance

- Comparison from the perspective of indigenous modernity:
Through Donghak and Daesoon Thought, this illuminates an East Asian modernity that developed along a path different from that of the West.
- The philosophical depth of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human relationships:
By analyzing the differences between Donghak and Daesoon regarding the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human relationships, this grasps the distinctive worldview of Korean religious and philosophical thought.
- Significance as a thought of social transformation:
This compares and analyzes the influence and transformative character of the two thoughts on the process of forming modern Korean society.
- Intellectual continuity and development:
This clarifies the respects in which Daesoon Thought inherited and developed Donghak as its "True Donghak," and the points at which it differentiated itself.

"A comparison of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human relationships in Donghak and Daesoon is an important study showing how Korea's distinctive philosophical and religious traditions achieved an indigenous development in the course of modernization."

Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationships in Donghak and Daesoon Thought

The Heaven-Human Relationship of the Way of Humanity (人道) and the Way of the Divine (神道)



The Way of Humanity (人道)



The Way of the Divine (神道)

Donghak Thought

- Introduces the concept of "Cheon-oe-cheon (天外天)"

Emphasizes a transcendent being beyond the existing Confucian concept of Heaven

- A practical thought centered on the Way of Humanity (人道)

Communicates with Cheon-oe-cheon (天外天) through the best practice a human being can perform

- Lack of reference to divine beings (神明)

Lack of sufficient understanding of the Way of the Divine (神道)

"Donghak Thought chose the path of the Way of Humanity (人道), communicating with Cheon-oe-cheon (天外天) by doing the utmost a human being can do."

Daesoon Thought

- Emphasizes the substantive role of divine beings (神明)

Communication of the Way of the Divine (神道) and structural change through the divine beings of Heaven and Earth (天地神明)

- A Gaebyeok-scale transformation of the structure of Heaven and Earth

Cosmic order and structural transformation through the Way of the Divine (神道)

- Resolution of grievances (解冤) and transformation of the structure of Heaven and Earth

Re-establishment of the principle of the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity through the resolution of grievances

"Daesoon Thought regrets that Donghak Thought, not fully understanding the Way of the Divine embodied in the 'Mandate of Heaven' (天命) and 'divine teaching' (神教), scarcely mentioned divine beings and did not move far beyond the Way of Humanity."

Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationships in Donghak and Daesoon Thought

Deepening and Re-establishment of the View of the Three Realms (三界觀)



The harmony and relationship of the Three Realms of Heaven (天), Earth (地), and Humanity (人)

The View of the Three Realms in Daesoon Thought

- Clearly distinguishes the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity (天地人) and emphasizes their harmony
- Values humanity as the mediator of Heaven and Earth — the harmonization of the divine and the human (神人調化)
- Humanity serves as the mediator in the harmonization of divine beings
- Whether Heaven and Earth succeed depends on humanity — a human-centered framework

The View of the Three Realms in Donghak Thought

- Humanity (天地人) and emphasizes their harmony weakened
- Harmonization of the divine and the human (天外天); lacks reference to the role of divine beings
- Confucianistic human-centered practical ethics
- A system that does not stay far from the Way of Humanity (人道)

"Daesoon Thought clearly designates as the harmonization of the divine and the human (神人調化) the human-centeredness of Heaven-Earth mediation — that humanity is interchangeable with Heaven and Earth, so that only when humanity is present can Heaven and Earth succeed."

Heaven (天) Humanity (人) Earth (地) — Daesoon Thought: harmony of the Three Realms and human mediation

Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationship

Social Practice and the Dotong-gunja (道通君子)



The Social Realization of the Earth-Human Relationship

"The Earth-Human relationship (地人關係) is realized through social practice, and the differences between the two thoughts appear in how they realize the ideal society."

Donghak Thought

- Simgueup-doyu (心急道儒): a Confucian scholar of urgent mind pursuing real-world change
 - Making the whole nation yangban: realizing equality so that the common people too become yangban
 - Practice-centered: active practice in reality and social transformation
- "Donghak emphasized the values of equality and equal distribution for a social reform centered on human practice."

Daesoon Thought

- Dotong-gunja (道通君子): emphasizes bringing forth sages who have attained the Dao
 - The Geumgangsan Gaebyeok: the process of transition into a world of immortals
 - Earthly immortals (地上神仙): realizing paradise in the present world
- "Daesoon, through the integration of the Way of the Divine (神道) and the Way of Humanity (人道), aimed at a Later Heaven paradise led by the Dotong-gunja (道通君子)."

Key Differences in the Practice of the Earth-Human Relationship

Donghak: centered on the outward realization of social equality; Daesoon: aiming at inner and outer integration through Dotong (道通)

Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationships in Donghak and Daesoon Thought

Yin-Yang and the Five Phases, and Sangsaeng and Harmony



Wood (木) Fire (火) Earth (土) Metal (金)
Water (水)

The Modern Significance of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases, and Sangsaeng and Harmony

Daesoon Thought

- Links the principle of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases to the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth (天地公事), sublimating it into a law of cosmic change
- Realizes the Later Heaven Gaebyeok (後天開闢) through the transition from Sanggeuk to Sangsaeng
- Promotes change in the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity through harmony and balance

Donghak Thought

- Insufficient reference to natural laws such as Yin-Yang and the Five Phases
- Focuses on human practice (the Way of Humanity) rather than on divine beings and natural law
- It emphasized social change, but its extension to transformation on a cosmic scale was limited

"Daesoon Thought introduced the harmonious cyclical principle of Yin-Yang and the Five Phases, presenting a Sangsaeng worldview that integrates humanity, nature, and the cosmos."

Comparison of the Indigenous Modernity of the Heaven-Human and Earth-Human Relationships in Donghak and Daesoon Thought

Comparison and Conclusion of the Indigenous Modernity of Donghak and Daesoon



Comparison and Implications of the Two Thoughts



Contemporary Significance

Category	Donghak Thought	Daesoon Thought
Central thought	Human-centered; the Way of Humanity (人道)	Harmonization of the divine and human; the Way of the Divine (神道)
Heaven-Human relationship	Cheon-oe-cheon (天外天); Sicheonju (侍天主)	Sangsaeng and harmony with divine beings; view of the Three Realms
Social practice	Simg eup-doyu; making the whole nation yangban	Dotong-gunja; earthly immortals (地上神仙)
Feature of modernity	Prototype of the equality movement	Dialectical structure; "True Donghak"

Overall Conclusion

- Two paths of indigenous modernity: Donghak realizes its own modernity as a human-centered thought of equality, and Daesoon through a comprehensive view of the Three Realms and a transformative understanding of the Way of the Divine
- Complementary development: Daesoon Thought systematized the divine beings, the Way of the Divine, and Yin-Yang and the Five Phases that Donghak had treated incompletely, developing as "True Donghak"
- Contemporary significance: it presents an alternative model of indigenous modernity grounded in an East Asian worldview, distinct from Western-centered modernization

"Donghak and Daesoon Thought, along a path different from Western-centered modernity, present two models of indigenous modernity arising from Korea's distinctive cultural and religious soil, thereby pointing modern society toward a pluralistic direction of development."