

## Seeking the Lost Threefold Thoughts: Relationships with God, Earth and Human being

### I. Introductory overview

“Mission from the margin” was the title of the new mission’s document in the 10<sup>th</sup>. General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Indeed Mission from the margin has not been recognized fully since Constantine’s new era of Christian history.<sup>1</sup> Christianity was recognized by the Roman Empire, but it no longer possesses its essential vitality which was more possible when Christianity was a minority and persecuted religion. Christianity contributed to the “Pax Romana” and the “uniformity” of the Roman Empire. But the creative voices of minorities are systematically ignored. This article investigates the lost minority tradition of Christianity which has some commonality with Korean threefold thought and principles. The purpose of this article is to illustrate this Korean thought and lost Christian tradition regarding this threefold thought as well. Even though this kind of tradition didn’t receive proper attention throughout Christianity; it has succeeded in various ways. In the event of the Ascendant of resurrected Jesus the man with a white cloth encouraged people on the margin like in Galilee to raise their voices to proclaim the message of life. (Act 1: 8) The forgotten Christian tradition of the margin which has a similarity to genuine Korean threefold thought could be reinvestigated. In order to correct the current material prosperity centered tendency of Christianity it is necessary to restore this kind of holistic perception of a relationship with God, human being and nature. It could contribute to differentiated development against the one-dimensional market capitalistic approach and uniformity of unsustainable development in this land of dualistic ideological division and excessive militarization. Instead of a dualistic extreme conflict we need to have a dialectic vision for the co-existence of Sang-Saeng and “symbiotic life” in order to construct “Dream Making Zone”.

### II. The Threefold Thought in Korea

In this chapter I would like to introduce a basic motif of Korean threefold thought which is based on the founding myth as remarkable. This thought of the founding myth is as follows:

According to the Korean incorporation or origin myth, the son of the sky god “Hwanin” asked a tiger and a bear who lived together in a cave, to be human. The son of the sky god “Hwanung” who had come with his father's permission to earth, to govern them, commanded them to stay for 100 days in the cave and to only eat 20 cloves of garlic and mugwort. In this situation the tiger gave up quickly, while the bear could do it with perseverance even though it was a difficult test. As a reward, the bear became a human being, a woman. This incarnated bear married the son of the sky god and gave birth to a son named Dangun (Tan gun). This being, a harmonious combination of heavenly and earthly beings, was the founder and first king of Korea on October 3, 2333 B.C.

---

<sup>1</sup>About mission and power see Meehyun Chung, “No more Flight From the Gender Justice and Eco Justice”, *Mission and Power: History, Relevance and Perils*, (London: Regnum, 2015) (will be published soon).

according to tradition.

In the Korean myth there is also a Trinity. Hwanin, Hwanung and Dangun were the three figures in unity, considered as grandfather, father and son. This triune god being made heaven, earth and man. From this myth threefold thought and principal is derived. Therefore the number 3 has been recognized as a perfect number.

This “heaven-earth-man” idea has affected Korean culture and the Korean language. King Sejong took the initiative to invent the Korean alphabet. In the Korean alphabet the Yin and Yang theory has combined with the “Five Elements doctrine”.<sup>2</sup> The Korean language is based on this universal thought and indeed the Asian concept of “heaven-earth-human”. Korean is a phonetic language. The human voice is based on Yin and Yang Theory and the Five Element system which is connected to the threefold concept. The principle of phonetic sounds is explained in this theory and system, because a human is related to universal elements and principles. The throat, back tooth, tongue, teeth and lips are related to the five elements. To voice sounds the principles involve these five elemental characters. This was used for the Korean vowels of Heaven (●) Earth (—) human ( | ).<sup>3</sup>

Besides this, King Sejong invented a device to measure rain in 1441. This rain gauge was the first in the world. Also, the rain gauge includes the combination of the “heaven-earth-human” because he was used it primarily for rice cultivation. The rice is a result of these three-time components: The Creator gives rain, the soil produces rice, human work combines these facets. Since Korea is very dependent on agriculture, it is important to wait for the rain. The rain was one of the key success factors for the cultivation of rice, because rice is a water plant. In the Korean language, the polite form is to be observed in describing the coming of rain. It implies the importance of rain. To receive rain is an act of gratitude.

There is another example of threefold harmony. Three Taeguk thought compared to yin and yang dual Taeguk is the authentic Korean thought<sup>4</sup> and includes a more profound meaning to overcome the mere dualism between yin and yang. Taeguk means literally great polarity, and implies the grand ultimate. It is perception for embracing all things and values in the universe of God, human being and nature. Three colors are used to refer to this thought of the Taeguk. Blue symbolizes sky, red symbolizes earth and yellow symbolizes human being. It is a more dialectic and universal concept. This three Taeguk thought has been adopted deeply by Korean culture and religion.

---

<sup>2</sup>The five elements are wood, fire, earth, metal and water which are ground elements for universe. This five element system is interconnected with Yin and Yang concept. Human as micro cosmos and universe as macro cosmos are related in interaction.

<sup>3</sup>In order to illustrate an additional example how this principle “heaven-earth-human” is used and applied in context, I would like to mention the logo of Yonsei University which is based on this three vowels. According to this principle “heaven-earth-human” logo Yonsei University has been made. The “○” and “—” in the University Logo derived from the first letter of “연세” (“Yonsei” in Korean). The circle “○” represents the sky, while the balance right “—” represents the horizon of the earth and “—” means “man”, as expressed in the Chinese character “人”.

<sup>4</sup> Celtic motif Three celion implies some similarity with this Three Taegeuk.

In a Korean myth the motive of trinity is broadly disseminated. The other example is the famous Three Gods Grandmother.<sup>5</sup>This goddess is responsible for childbirth and she supports child deliverance. She is integrated into versions of religious motifs, folktales and myths which are related to creation and giving life.

This triune principle is not only a matter of Asian terminology.<sup>6</sup> It is a central principle of the Christian message, as this threefold relationship is established with God, his fellow-creatures and fellow humans, of which it depends.<sup>7</sup>Threefold thought underlines harmony and the combination of heaven, earth and human being. Additionally Christianity highlights not only this kind of universal harmony, but also God as creator, sustainer and savior.<sup>8</sup> Between God as creator and all co-creature (Mit-welt) situates the relationship of creation and covenant. To speak with the famous praise of Karl Barth“Creation as the external basis of the covenant.The covenant as the internal basis of creation.”<sup>9</sup>Compared to Christian thought, in the Korean threefold thought there is no perception of this relationship between creation and covenant through creator and creature. To conceive this universe as the house or household of God is rather a genuine Christian perception.

The Greek word *oikos* refers to a house or household in a narrow sense, and to the universe in broad sense. From this word other important concepts like economy, ecology and ecumenism are derived. All three concepts are combined with *oikos*. How are these words related to each other? The same Greek root alludes to the inhabited world and includes all elements of the universe not only human being. It means it helps to correct human centered ideas, furthermore male centered andro-centrism. The well-being of all parts of universe is important not just part of it. To restore the threefold thought could help one think widely and intersectionally. In the Korean case patriarchal masculinity in militarism and greed for material richness without thinking of communal goodness are great obstacles to developing this valuable traditional thought. Not only to recognize the Korean authentic thought, but also to understand Christian spirit fully, it is necessary to recover these ideas, to apply them in all dimensions of social life and to practice them day-to-day.

There are many verses in the Bible in which God and the *oikos*- house are connected. In Hebrews, our globe is called the house of God. In this house, Jesus serves as High Priest. We live in this house together with other creature as the “God’s family (*Familia Dei*) and as a “guest”.<sup>10</sup>We have to keep the regulation in order to live on this planet. “... For any one house is built by someone; but that built by all things is God. Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, to be a testimony of those words which were to be spoken, but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of hope unto the end. ” (Hebrews 3: 1-6) “We have for now, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, which he has prepared for us a new and living way through the veil, that is, his flesh, and having an high priest

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. PyunHae-mun, *Threefold grandmother as goddess who designates childbirth*, (Seoul: Sonamu, 2008).

<sup>6</sup>This kind of Korean triune concepts could support to understand profound mystery of triune God as vestigiatriunitatis.

<sup>7</sup>To apply this threefold thought to Korean Theology Hoik Huh invented a new term “Theocosmoandric Theology” More about his explanation about this subject see <http://mokja.info>. And some critical review to this theological approach see Soonkyung Park, *With the People those who Remember the Past*, (Seoul: four season, 2003), 238-246.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Andrew Callander, “Exploring a Christian conception of economic life from within Karl Barth’s doctrine of creation,” (Ph.D. Diss. University of Otago Dunedin New Zealand, 2012), 16-49.

<sup>9</sup>Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatic. The Doctrine of Creation, III/1*, (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1982), 94-329.

<sup>10</sup>Christoph Stückelberger, *Umwelt und Entwicklung: eine sozioethische Orientierung*, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1997), 294-338.

over the house of God. ” (Hebrews 10: 21-22) Thanks to the event of Jesus the curtain in the sacred place has been torn apart. Through the torn curtain, the gap between the secular and the sacred is leveled. What is important is the aspect of the house of God, which has been restored by Jesus Christ. God has prepared this house and we are part of it like Paul described as “God’s garden and God’s building.”(1 Corinthians 3:9) This idea is similar to the Shekinah in the Kabala, or the eco-feminist ideas of Rosmarie R. Ruether, Sallie MacFague and Ivone Gebara, etc. that emphasize a pan-en-theistic dimension in eco awareness and interrelatedness between human-being and universe; here the house of God is connected with the body, globe and the universe is seen as a whole. The Korean “heaven-human- earth” idea is not much different.

I want to transfer this idea of *oikos* in the Bible to the Korean context regarding the verb “build.” First, for a terminological explanation of the verb I must emphasize the importance of rice in Korea again. The rice is a major staple food and keeps the people alive. Rice has an important economic value, even more important is its importance as a part of life. Its greatest importance is as a component of life. “Rice is heaven” is one of the best known poems by Chiha Kim<sup>11</sup>:

Rice is heaven  
 Like heaven you can’t possess it as your own  
 Rice is supposed to be shared  
 Rice is heaven  
 ...  
 When rice goes into the mouth,  
 You keep heaven in your body  
 Rice is heaven  
 Oh, rice is supposed to be shared

As I mentioned above in connection with the rain water meter, rice is one of the most important elements of life. This verb, which is used in connection with rice cultivation and rice cooking, is also used in house-building. In Korean, this verb is equally in the different contexts of rice, clothes and house used: planting rice 농사를 짓다, cooking rice 밥을 짓다, sewing clothes 옷을 짓다, building house 집을 짓다. This verb is used in the

---

<sup>11</sup>Translation from this book slightly changed by Meehyun Chung. There is another version Kim Chi Ha, *The Gold-Crowned Jesus and Other Writings*, ed. by C.S. Kim, (New York:Orbis, 1978), 30.

Food is heaven  
 You can't make it on your own  
 Food should be shared  
 Food is heaven.  
 ...  
 Food is heaven  
 As we eat  
 God enters us  
 Food is heaven.  
 Oh, food  
 Should be shared and eaten by all.

agricultural culture, especially for joint collaboration. Furthermore this is used for sustaining of life like wearing, eating and staying. That it is not simply a matter of creating, but the result is on behalf of the community's goodness. Building or House is not merely object for constructing, but the aspect of staying alive is important. The house is in the sense not an object for investment, and not merely an object of development. It is to remain as a community and thereby for well-being of we-ness. God makes a human being as a co-worker or fellow worker.(1 Corinthians 3: 5-9 ) It is an invitation to keep constructively life and not death.

### III. Lost tradition of Christian minority

Throughout Christian history there was always debate between orthodoxy and heretic. Like most women's stories in Christianity many non-Roman Catholic traditions were disregarded and their spiritualities were neglected. After Christianity has taken the imperial position to judge others, this kind of judgement happened as on-going process. Mainline Church has possessed making norm and power to rule while non-mainline stream pursued in the edge.

Therefore it is important to restore the lost value within Christianity in order to exam and reevaluate. There are few examples to focus on in this article: first, Celtic spirituality in early Christianity. Second, women's mysticism in medieval era. Third, wholistic idea of Moravian tradition in the modernity.

1. Celtic spirituality is based on Johannine tradition in the bible. While the Celtic mission was derived from *Iona based on the Johannine tradition*, the Roman Catholic mission was derived from Rome based on the Petrine authority. Through the conflict between Roman-Catholic Christianity and Celtic Christianity which is highlighted in the Synod of Whitby 664 it is gradually disappeared in the established Christian tradition. Because this Synod made one-dimensional decision and raised the hand of Roman Catholic. Prior to this synod there was important debate between Pelagius who is related to Celtic Spirituality and Augustine who is supported by the Roman Catholic in the fourth century. Pelagius was judged as heretic, so Celtic tradition already lost their institutional background of the mainline churches. However it is not completely disappeared. It was maintained as a tradition where intimate relationship with God, human being and nature, the eco-friendly sensitivity and sensuous cognition were kept.

2. While scholastism blooming as male centred academic discourse for God's existence, there was a different method and way among women to express their own experience and faith. Since women were excluded in public education and public theological debate, it was not allowed to be part of this scholastism. They find their own way of theological discourse as women's mysticism in the Medieval Age. One of leading figure of woman mystic was Hildegard of Bingen(1098-1179) who was a pioneer and a sort of teacher for St. Francis. She was an abbess and important female writers who wrote many academic books about medicine, theology and botanic and composed much liturgical music etc. Hildegard of Bingen was indeed one of the most influential women in the Medieval Ages. She has held many offices and functions. She emphasized the right balance in all things and harmony between micro and macrocosmos. In addition, she emphasized the power of the color green for life, in which everything is connected to everything. She illustrated healthy relationship between heaven, earth and human-being.

3. Moravian tradition is rooted in the reformation of Jan Hus who was forerunner of German reformation in

Bohemia. This reformation could be called as “the first reformation” as like the German theologian F.W. Marquardt mentioned.<sup>12</sup> However in his time he was judged in the council of Constance as heretic and lively burned. His spirit was kept through exile Christian community. One of leading figures was Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670)<sup>13</sup>, a contemporary of Rene Descartes (1596-1650). He was a Reformed theologian, who lived most of his life in exile and focused his theology on the harmony of the world. Comenius developed peaceful ideas out of, basically, trinitarian thinking and universal harmony. However since the Enlightenment, the mechanical dualistic thought of Rene Descartes and the Cartesian separation<sup>14</sup> of “subject-object relationships,” have had a major influence on modern scientific developments.

For Comenius faith has priority over rationality. The two aspects are connected to, not excluded from, each other. He emphasizes our relatedness to the rest of creation, but his voice has not been heard within the mainline church and mainstream of theology.<sup>15</sup> All webs of life and creatures are important in his thought. For Comenius science, research, and exploration without connection to the social, political, and moral aspects of humanity are meaningless. Knowledge and human action belong together.<sup>16</sup> In Comenius’ thought, the human being is a microcosm, comparable to the universe as a macrocosm. Every component of the human being is reflected in the universe. As Comenius stresses, peace in the world is rooted in interconnectedness.

To sum it up since enlightenment Christianity combined with western norm and technology more strongly. Christianity contributed to make other part as object and margin while western Christianity became subject and center. Western standard and western culture are as norm and measure reinforced. However among western Christianity there was different approach toward God, human being and nature. This kind of thought became not mainline stream and disregarded so far.

#### IV. Transformative paradigm change

In the previous chapter, I tried to illustrate the ideal value of Korea regarding the threefold thought and explaining the complementarity of different values. I have described the so wonderful spiritual principle which is deeply engraved in the culture, history and religion.<sup>17</sup> But I do not want only to uncritically idealize this value. The important thing is how it is implemented as a daily praxis. It’s all about everyday reality. But what is the current reality? With three aspects, I would like to illustrate the current situation in Korea.

---

<sup>12</sup>F. W. Marquardt, *Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie. Prolegomena zur Dogmatik*, (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1992), 9.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. Meehyun Chung, “Gender und Entwicklungspolitik”, *Theologie und Geschlecht. Dialoge querbeet*, hrsg. von Heike Walz und David Plüss, (Münster:LIT, 2008), 261-275.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo, ed., *Gender/Body/Knowledge. Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, (London: Rutgers University press, 1989), 3.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. Jan Milic Lochman, “Der Mensch im ganzen der Schöpfung. Zur ökumenischen und ökologischen Aktualität von Johann Amos Comeniu”, *Comenius als Theologe*, hrsg. von Vladimir J. Dvorak and J.B. Lasek, 34.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Klaus Schaller, “Komenskys Auseinandersetzung mit dem Cartesianismus”, *Zwanzig Jahre Comeniusforschung in Bochum*, hrsg. von Klaus Schaller, (St. Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1990), 364f.

<sup>17</sup>For example in the Korean construction tradition there was a regulation, not to harm a tree during the construction of a house, in case there is a tree in the yard, but to find a way to protect the tree.

## 1. Godlessness in Our Age

After the liberation of the country and the Korean War, the Korean Church has grown numerically very quickly. Korean Protestantism in general was due to mission's very North America oriented influence. Without having much awareness of the indigenization of Christianity Americanism has heavily influenced the development of Korean Church. The first numerical growth took place in the beginning of the 20th century. The second stage of expansion was observed in the 50s and 60s, where general national economic growth was visible and booming, because everything had at this time to do with the rapid growth and recovery after the wars. American Christianity was considered as a symbol of material blessings. The core message of the Gospel is therefore confused with American Christian culture. In the 70s and 80s of the democratization process was very important under the dictatorship.

Power mechanism and monopolization of power were criticized. Nevertheless, the awareness of the oppression of nature by humans and the necessary attention to the contemporary world power balance had not yet emerged. Material growth in this period was much more important than anything else. Ecological awareness has emerged only later in the 90s. Economic growth without having solidarity with marginalized people under neo-liberalism and the trap of globalization gains more attention because the disparity between rich and poor became a more serious issue.

Meanwhile, once Korea reached a certain standard of living according to the OECD criteria, the ecclesiastical landscape also changed slowly. According to census surveys the rate of religious affiliation has decreased, relating to Protestants the most. The Number of Protestants has decreased in the last 10 years by 19.7% to 18.3%, or about 1.4%.<sup>18</sup> The recent tendency in general shows ongoing decreasing. Generally it shows that after Koreans became rich, even though the economic disparity is more visible, religious interest has decreased. It means religious matters are mostly used to fulfill material needs. Relationship with God is used for material prosperity.

## 2. Nature Oblivion

In this contemporary digital age, it's all about image. To admire real nature is rather forgotten. The nature encountered rather in images on a computer screen or smartphone. The conversation with nature happens in this digital way. The possibility of having an intimate relationship with nature is rather limited for a life-style in the big cities like Seoul. Moving to the cities and the urban / rural divide is also a big problem. Because of weak competitiveness and lack of access to public facilities in the countryside, there is often not enough conditions for survival. As a result Korea has developed as major city-centered. Urban poor suffer from not having proper living conditions, while elderly people remain in the countryside. Due to urbanization and resettlement in the big cities, there are few green spaces and no special opportunity for citizens to have a proper relationship with nature. Instead of nature ongoing construction takes over everywhere.

---

<sup>18</sup>Cf. [http://www.kdi.re.kr/infor/ep\\_view.jsp?num=98021](http://www.kdi.re.kr/infor/ep_view.jsp?num=98021) (visited on 28<sup>th</sup>. Oct. 2014)

### 3. Ignorance towards Others

The new means of digital communication such as Facebook, smartphone, Google, Twitter, etc. allow versatile communication with people from the distance, on the other hand they prevent intimate conversations with others face to face. The profit-oriented economic structures and the prevailing mindset are pronounced everywhere. Competition is felt strongly in this elbow society. Busy city life forces people to ignore neighbors. Additionally because of the dominant “pure blood mindset” it is hard to accept other people from outside of the country. “Mixed blood” is disrespected. And based on Orientalism there is conscious and unconscious racism in the society as well. Regarding skin color people are treated differently.

### 4. From military trace to Dream Making Zone

This kind of threefold forgetting and ignorance of God, human being and nature leads to destruction on different levels. There are various cases which show the great lack of awareness of the environment as a co-creature.<sup>19</sup> Just to mention two major examples first is the four rivers restoration project. According to Government the four major rivers restoration project was launched as a multi-layered green growth project in 2009. The four rivers refer to The Han river, Nakdongriver, Yeongsan river and Geum river. However in 2014 it has already been demonstrated with scientific<sup>20</sup> evidence that it has restored by rather destroyed. Second is the Miryang project for high-voltage transmission lines. It is a project to build of high-voltage power lines connected to a nuclear power plant. Nuclear energy has not been waived because it is ostensibly economically

---

<sup>19</sup>But in small scale movements with their awareness training, there is a significant tendency to do something against such profit-oriented thinking and acting. Examples are pastors in rural areas who give environmental education and operate eco-agriculture, solar panels on church roofs or buildings or the movement for reducing food waste. There is also various network training under multi-religious groups to increase profit awareness and to unite for action. There is another positive example of a successful movement for protecting from destruction during developments. Keyangsan in Incheon is a favorite mountain for Incheon citizens where a good number of people could observe the process of seasons and promote awareness for becoming a friend with nature. However on the other hand it is an attractive location for developing a golf course for the minority of rich people by a Jaebul Company which means a conglomerate.

A protection movement against this plan was started by a female environmental activist Shin Jeong-Eun, an activist who stayed on a tree for 56 days. It was a battle between David and Goliath. It is continued by a protestant pastor Yoon In-Jung who continued this action for a further 155 days. This action was supported by this congregation. Young and old, male and female, Christian and non-Christian did not matter as belonging to this movement sparked and attracted the attention of ordinary citizens. As a result the city government officially made a resolution not to permit the building of Leisure Park for golf on behalf of the rich minority, but to protect it for poor majority. This is a very constructive case which could be multiplied. For more about this demonstration see Yoon In-Jung, Shin Jeong-Eun, *Letter from Pineforest. 210 days on the Keyang Mountain*, (Seoul: Dongyeon, 2008); <http://www.greenkorea.org>

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Kim San, *The Rivers which is not flown. Witness, 4 rivers restoration project*, (Seoul: Nunbit, 2014);

KBS Documentary report, Saying hello to 4 rivers,  
[http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH\\_NEWS\\_CODE=2914476](http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH_NEWS_CODE=2914476) (visited on 2014.10.19)

cheaper. Profit-oriented thoughts always come first.

But a major destructive problem has been caused by the Korean War which left huge traces of tragedy and suffering throughout Korea. Through the division of Korea many kinds of suffering and social problems in the personal area and in the public area have occurred. Due to Korea's geopolitical context and complexity has been frequently used for the militarization of the Asia Pacific in the past, present and for the future. On the island of Jeju, a large US naval base will continue to be built. One of most important incidents is related to Gangjeong Village on Jeju Island which the most beautiful volcanic island and a well-known place for honeymoon due to the beauty of its nature and location. But this place has also been used as a place of exile due to separation from the peninsula and difficulty of transport in history. In modern history it has also been used for ideological conflicts like the Jeju 4.3 Massacre. Since publicizing the construction of a naval base on Jeju in 2002, the current ongoing conflict emerged.<sup>21</sup> It is not only a conflict between construction and destruction, protection of environment and economic interest, but it is also based on ideological dualism. Korean is still living under this kind of spiritual destruction of separation and dualistic ideas and trauma of the war.<sup>22</sup>

Not to mention these in detail, there is a unique potentiality around the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to develop in a totally different way. Even there are also diverse problems of landmines which threat the lives of many people in both Koreas.<sup>23</sup> This kind of human made device already has produced countless victims in Korea. A tragic accident can lead to the ongoing suffering of a whole family.

One positive side regarding protection of bio diversity in this nobody's land in Korean peninsula could be mentioned. Due to nonhuman destruction many species remain alive. Historically the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was created in 1953 as the part of Korean Armistice Agreement between the People's Republic of China, North Korea and the United Nations Command approximately 38<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude. Since nobody has lived there for more than 60 years, this area along the length of 250 km has become an unofficial nature reserve for bio diversity. DMZ divides Korea roughly into two. In spite of this worldwide well-known bio diversity of the DMZ due to a lack of consensus between the two Koreas, the attempt of South Korea has been deferred from nomination for the Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) of UNESCO. Along with this, the entire Korean peninsula should become a Demilitarized Zone, not just partly around the military demarcation line. This means that the Ceasefire or Armistice agreement should be changed into a permanent Peace agreement. It could contribute to healing the people who are affected by long-sustained fear, threat and hostility by this division of Koreas.

The victor because victim; *Victor quiavictima*. Countless people have suffered from the Korean War and division of Korea already. Still all young male Koreans with minor exceptions spend precious time in military

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Keun-Joo Christine Pae, "Feminist Activism as Interfaith Dialogue: A Lesson from Gangjeong Village of Jeju Island, Korea," *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (April 2014), 55-69.

<sup>22</sup> Due to high cost of reunification majority of young people do not have so much interest in reunification. They prefer cheap option of status quo. It means to live in this divided country and dualistic hostility.

<sup>23</sup> There is many kind of attempt to make this issue more visible and to let victim be protected by law for compensation. More about NGO efforts regarding this issue see <http://www.psakorea.org/>

service. Ongoing tension and conflict happens continuously. Therefore militarism influences not only the military system, but also the entire Korean culture. The whole society is affected by this patriarchal military order-obedience mechanism. Those who possess hegemonic power dictate everything instead of promoting the spirit of empowerment and embracing of diversity. A very monotonic linear idea dominates and does not consider otherness and complexity. This kind of power chain is hard to break because it is easy to monopolize power. Good governance is not a question at all. The ruling government's only solution is to keep this system. It is great hindrance to the development of democratic creativity and the acceptance of diversity, or to reach a consensus by recognition of different ideas and thoughts.

The speed oriented psychological pressure for economic growth and the lack of a communal oriented mind-set and ecological awareness etc. are also influenced by this uncertainty of division and potentiality of war. We need to be liberated from all kinds of fear and mechanisms of oppression which are related to the issue of national security. Breaking the chain of all bondage to fear is more necessary than before. Where nature is destroyed too much due to human economic interest brings Korea a new opportunity. Someday a peace treaty should be completed for peace in Korea. Afterward this zone of the tragic Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) could be transformed into a new land, a Dream Making Zone (DMZ). But this is not just an eschatological dimension of Utopia. "The LORD All-Powerful will destroy the power of death and wipe away all tears." (Is 25:8) In the process of marching toward God's reign we could reach our human goal through protection and preservation instead of human destruction. The DMZ shouldn't be a symbol for the cold war anymore, but for reconciliation through the threefold relationship of God, human being and co-creature.

## V. Conclusion

When we use no drastic words, we note the distortion of creation in the prevailing realities. It depends on how we overcome in the ongoing secularization and capitalist-oriented world, the enslavement of the human mind.

In a time of growth, where everything is measured according to physical criteria and figures, I'm not very able to resist, to recognize human limitations and to emphasize the variety of connectedness. Although the influence of religion has lost some weight, it is important to strengthen healthy religious functions and thereby give positive energy to share control.

Talking about climate change and biodiversity for Sustainable Development as the triple relationship of "heaven-earth-human" is very important to restore. It has in the first line to do with the recognition of the diversity of nature and our life system of interdependence and connectedness. It is promoting diversity in every step of life and transforming culture in the private sector as well as public sphere. Intersectionality as ethnicities, sexual orientation, religious preference, physical ability etc., should be also widely considered. As the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37) illustrated the person who showed mercy and pity was not a religious leader in the established mainline institution, but a Samaritan who was an ethnically marginalized person. Our nature has been beaten by robbers. We are those religious leaders who didn't make any efforts to rescue the victim. And we are also robbers because we have only material greed to take from others including nature.

Christian spirit of resistance against status quo of oppressive power inherited throughout Christian history. Even

it sometimes looked like dying embers. The glimmers of hope are never distinguished and have sparked in every epoch. It revives dream of liberation. Small scale dream in micro level could cumulate and then large scale dream in macro level could be reached. Creative minority brought the spark to maintain this hope of transforming of Christianity. Thanks to them Christianity kept being alive even they were frequently persecuted and ignored. Our part is to commemorate them and this tradition make more visible.

“Christianity is blown away from the modern Christians. It drags the ecclesiastical forms continuously, but the actual living of hearts and minds is the fact, and one has gone before the end of this there. The outer evolution of life is the people so impressive that the outdated religious interiors disappear. But a silent church of Jesus Christ remains; this does not die, and from this a new one can come. Thus, the line runs parallel. Confucianism and Christianity as a robe are torn; instead of the robe must come the man who is capable of the pure knowledge of God.”<sup>24</sup>This was quote from Christoph Blumhardt in the 19th century. He has in his time observed in China a certain parallelism between Confucianism and Christianity. He saw that both Christianity in the West and Confucianism in the East had lost their vitality as a living force for an established main religion in a status quo oriented society.

The reduction in numbers of Christianity’s interior has now also become a problem in Korea. But I think it is important rather than being afraid of losing members to revise the majority of evangelical Christians inside a growth bias and not to denote natural disaster as God’s punishment and to see a lot of times human error. It is important to raise awareness of environmental and economic justice and jointly exercise political and social responsibility and to carry on.

There is no denying that involving Western churches many indigenous cultures and economic systems were destroyed. Nevertheless, today it is also important to acknowledge the positive aspects of the mission. We all face one of the biggest turnarounds. Reappraisal of the negative effect of Christianity in the Church’s history does not continue. But that should not be an obstacle; the good news continues to share that one can combine word and deed. Metanoia, repentance, is one of the strengths of Christianity. Metanoia makes space for new things through emptying first old ones despite their weakened positions. The churches could contribute to the great transformation, because the emphasis of Metanoia makes such action possible. To speak with Karl Barth, “The movement of the church is ... a strong breaking ... breaking up so takes place in a crisis. Determined leave is taken because of a friend, now very near the maybe ... has its advantages. And resolute devotion is because instead of a still far, in hope affirmed that at least has the disadvantage to be still plenty unknown in his magnificent form. As the church breaks up, she has chosen, decided. It has the nostalgia for what they leave behind, banned in advance.”<sup>25</sup>Not only great action is large and important, and small transformation is not small. Each step is important.

The old DMZ is symbol for broken relationship, hostility and separation. It could be replaced as the new DMZ. Leaning on the power of the Holy Spirit we could transform to construct the new Dream Making Zone out of as a symbol for interconnectedness, gratitude and reciprocity. To seek for forgotten threefold thought in Korean

---

<sup>24</sup>Christoph Blumhardt, *Christus in der Welt. Briefe an Richard Willhelm*, (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1958), 241.

<sup>25</sup>Karl Barth, “Aufbrechen-Umkehren-Bekennen”, *Letzte Zeugnisse*, (Zürich: EVZ, 1969), 63-64

tradition might be very first step to approach toward this goal. Third way is necessary in order to overcome mechanical dualism of tension and dichotomy like white and black, wrong and false, capitalism and communism. Afterward dialectical synthesis could be derived through this tension.

#### Abstract

This article is composed of three parts. The first part is an introduction of Korean threefold thought. The second illustrates the marginalized Christian tradition which has some commonality with this threefold thought. The third and last part is an attempt to apply these lost traditions in order to restore the Korean spirit in this neo-liberalism affected era and to practice it in daily life. Korean culture is based on the threefold thought and principal regarding to God, Earth and Human being.

In Korean culture, myth and religious elements threefold thought's motive and harmony are widely observed. Exploring these components in various areas is the purpose of this article.

This basic overall traditional Korean principal has some commonality with marginalized Christian tradition. A combination between Korean thought and this Christian tradition could contribute to understanding the Christian spirit fully because it is a comprehensive approach to have a threefold relationship with God, Human being and Nature.

The last part of this essay demonstrates some examples of recent Korean history regarding environmental issues which is also connected with patriarchal masculinity in militarism, boundless greed in neo-liberalism and mass spiritual destruction on behalf of material richness and external growth. This article ends with the suggestion of changing the demilitarized zone to dream making zone toward transforming our society.

#### Key words:

Threefold thoughts, militarism, ecumenism, tradition, relationship

#### Bibliography

Barth, Karl, *Church Dogmatic. The Doctrine of Creation, III/1*, (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1982).

\_\_\_\_\_, "Aufbrechen-Umkehren-Bekennen," *Letzte Zeugnisse*, (Zürich: EVZ, 1969).

Blumhardt, Christoph, *Christus in der Welt. Briefe an Richard Willhelm*, (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1958).

Callander, Andrew, "Exploring a Christian conception of economic life from within Karl Barth's doctrine of creation," (Ph.D. Diss. University of Otago Dunedin New Zealand, 2012).

Chung, Meehyun, "Gender und Entwicklungspolitik", *Theologie und Geschlecht. Dialoge querbeet*, hrsg. von Heike Walz und David Plüss, (Münster:LIT, 2008).

Kim, Chi Ha, *The Gold-Crowned Jesus and Other Writings*, ed. by C.S. Kim, (New York:Orbis, 1978).

- Kim, San, *The Rivers which is not flown. Witness, 4 rivers restoration project*, (Seoul: Nunbit, 2014).
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Bordo, Susan R., ed., *Gender/Body/Knowledge. Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, (London: Rutgers University press, 1989).
- Lochman, Jan Milic, “Der Mensch im ganzen der Schöpfung. Zur ökumenischen und ökologischen Aktualität von Johann Amos Comenius,” *Comenius als Theologe*, hrsg. von Vladimir J. Dvorak and Jan B. Lasek, (Prag: Nadace Comenius, 1998).
- Marquardt, Friedrich W., *Von Elend und Heimsuchung der Theologie. Prolegomena zur Dogmatik*, (Gütersloh: GütersloherVerlagshausMohn, 1992).
- Pae, Keun-Joo Christine, “Feminist Activism as Interfaith Dialogue: A Lesson from Gangjeong Village of Jeju Island, Korea ,” *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (April 2014).
- Park, Soonkyung, *With The People Those Who Remember ThePast*, (Seoul: four season, 2003).
- Pyun, Hae-mun, *Threefold grandmother as goddess who designates childbirth*, (Seoul: Sonamu, 2008).
- Schaller, Klaus, “Komenskys Auseinandersetzung mit dem Cartesianismus,” *Zwanzig Jahre Comeniusforschung in Bochum*, hrsg. von Klaus Schaller, (St. Augustin: Academia Verlag), 1990.
- Stückelberger, Christoph, *Umwelt und Entwicklung: eine sozialetische Orientierung*, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1997).
- Yoon, Injung, Shin Jeongeun, *Letter from Pineforest. 210 days on the KeyangMountain*, (Seoul: Dongyeon, 2008).
- <http://mokja.info>
- <http://www.greenkorea.org>
- <http://www.psakorea.org>
- [http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH\\_NEWS\\_CODE=2914476](http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/NewsView.do?SEARCH_NEWS_CODE=2914476)