

## **Toward a Tonghak Ecofeminist Spirituality of Ecojustice**

### **I. Introduction**

In considering the healing of the earth community in all of its crises -- notably beyond corporate global economic disorders, expanding social and economic inequality, war and use of violence for terror, etc. -- it is the ecological crisis which has been the most detrimental, yet it is the crisis for which we are least prepared.<sup>1</sup> The ecological crisis is not simply about disrupting global biophysical ecosystems, but rather it encompasses a total crisis including the social and cultural systems in the entire global biotic community.

In this paper, I see the root cause of this ecological crisis to be the cultural connection between natural domination and social domination. I then will develop an ecological spirituality of ecojustice from the Tonghak tradition and ecofeminism as a way to heal our global crisis. In the second part, I will explore the interconnection between the domination of women and the destruction of nature from an ecofeminist perspective based on Rosemary Ruether's ecofeminist insights regarding transcendent dualism as the cultural root of all forms of domination as compared with Sherry Ortner's anthropological insights on the women-nature connection. I will also affirm the distortion of human relationality into sexism as original sin.

In the third part, as an alternative to patriarchal dualisms, I will develop a Tonghak spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju* as ecofeminist relationality in terms of its metaphysical implications representing radical unity and diversity in the interdependent network of the cosmic life. In the fourth part, I will also envision a Tonghak ecofeminist community of ecojustice as I associate the ethical implications of *Si Ch'ŏnju* with the ecofeminist notion of ecojustice. I will finally envision a Tonghak ecofeminist eschatological vision of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk*, in which I stress our conscious, responsible and yet humble participation in the earth community, as a goal of the Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice.

### **II. Ecofeminist Interconnections Between the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature**

---

<sup>1</sup> This was summarized by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Davos, Switzerland, 24-28 Jan, 2007. See [www.weforum.org/en/index.htm](http://www.weforum.org/en/index.htm)

According to ecofeminism,<sup>2</sup> the women-nature connection has been used as a patriarchal ideology to justify male domination over women and nature. Sherry Ortner explains this male double domination of women and nature as a universal phenomenon in most cultures through the symbolic connection of women-nature and men-culture.<sup>3</sup> According to her, every culture devalues women by associating women with "something" it deems to be less valuable than itself, that is, nature. This cultural pattern demonstrates the male monopoly of culture in which men are identified with culture while women are associated with nature. This supposed control of culture over nature legitimizes men's domination of women. She argues that women, in fact, are not closer to nature than men. She emphasizes that the association between women and nature lies not in any biological differences, but also is rooted in the cultural ideologies that make women appear closer to nature than culture and make women's tasks, roles and psyche inferior to men's.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. Transcendent Dualism as the Cultural Root of All Forms of Domination

Sherry Ortner's anthropological study of universal female subordination and the hierarchy of culture over nature provides important support for Rosemary Ruether's ecofeminist symbolical connection between the oppression of women and nature. However, we may ask a question: Is the symbolic connection between women and nature trans-historical and cross-cultural? In response to this

---

<sup>2</sup> Ecofeminism, which combines ecology and feminism in their deep ways, especially deep ecology and radical feminism, is a critical theory from which we evaluate the cultural and social roots of the double dominations of women and nature, and a redemptive vision or practice of a healed relationship of mutuality between male and female, the rich and the poor, and humans and nature, by seeking an ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice. Ruether, "Ecofeminism: Symbolic and social connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature," in *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, edited by Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum, 1993), 13-14. For ecofeminism, see Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1988); Judith Plant, ed., *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (Philadelphia: New Society, 1989); Irene Diamond & Gloria Feman Orestein, eds., *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990); Greta Gaard, ed., *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993); Yoon-Jae Chang, "Ecofeminism and Ecofeminist Theologies: Toward a More Holistic Theory and Praxis," *Korea Journal of Christian Studies* 39 (2005/5), 113-130; Eun-Hey Kim, "The Kingdom of God and Symbol: Feminist God-Talk in Cultural Analysis," *Korea Journal of Christian Studies* 44 (2006/4), 287-314.

<sup>3</sup> Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 67-88. Ortner identifies three phenomena in nearly all cultures that show male domination of women: (1) a cultural ideology regarding female tasks and roles as less valuable; (2) the attribution of women to impurity and defilement due to their biological reproduction; (3) the exclusion of females from involvement in the public sphere.

<sup>4</sup> Sherry Ortner, 75-80. What makes women appear closer to nature than men? She locates the cultural association of women with nature in three dimensions: women's physiology, social roles and psyche. Women's physiology and reproductive functions are similar to the reproductive functions of nature, while men's production is closer to the creative power of culture. Women's roles of reproduction limit their social roles to the domestic domain. Women's social roles based on their physiology provide women with a different psychic structure from men.

question, I will examine Rosemary Ruether's claim that transcendent dualism is the key cultural root of all forms of dominations.

Ruether first attributes the early root of social and natural domination to the male consciousness toward women and nature arising out of the usual male puberty rites in which pubescent men begin to separate themselves from the female sphere of their early socialization and then to gradually identify with the male sphere. Here Ruether generally agrees with Ortner's views about the cultural association between women and nature, and men and culture, as rooted in the earliest social patterns. Nevertheless, Ruether questions Ortner's universal claim on the symbolic correlation of oppressed women and dominated nature based on her historical analysis of Hebrew and Greek culture. Ruether points to Ortner's failure to recognize the ambivalence in the symbol of nature, while Ruether recognizes the ambivalence of the symbol of women as the disvalued opposite category to men and yet the source of life or the Divine, in her recognition of cultural particulars.<sup>5</sup>

The problem with Ortner's women-nature symbolic connection is derived from her dualistic view of nature as a reality apart from and below humanity, rather than as one nexus of nature of which humanity is an inseparable part.<sup>6</sup> Ruether attempts to identify how this reversed view of humanity as outside of nature has occurred in cultural consciousness. The human-nature hierarchy must be inextricably interlinked with male-female hierarchy. But, Ruether demonstrates that the process of this reversal of natural reality is more complex than Ortner suggests, as she sees the growing symbolic connection between women and nature in the Mediterranean and in the early Christian and Western cultures.

In the Babylonian Creation story, Ruether finds the rise of male domination over female and nature in a transition from a more egalitarian matricentric society to a patriarchal system, and from a reproductive model to an artisan model for cosmogenesis.<sup>7</sup> But, in the process of male domination over the wild primal matter/Mother, nature is seen as the matrix of chaos and cosmos in which the divine drama takes place. The divine is not transcendent over this matrix of nature but immanent in it. The

---

<sup>5</sup> Rosemary Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 72-74; Carol J. Adams, ed., *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*, 15-16.

<sup>6</sup> Like planetary biologists based on Gaia hypothesis, such as James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, Ruether sees nature as a living system "apart from human influence in its own constant process of adaptation and change." Human transformation of the rest of nature is also a part of this process: Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 5-6. See also James Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan, *Microcosmos: Four Billions Years of Evolution from Our Microbian Ancestors* (New York: Summit Books, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> Rosemary Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 16-18.

female is not only related with the chaotic but also with a life-giving power against death.<sup>8</sup> Here I see a loose connection between the domination of women and nature, especially its chaotic and life-giving power, with all of nature's spheres beginning to be controlled and dominated.

The connection between women and nature in Hebraic culture is greater but more ambivalent than in the Babylonian. For example, no strict class hierarchy is found in the Creation story since human beings are viewed as "a unified corporate entity" created in the image of God. This view of humanity makes gender relations complex. While "humanity created in the image of God" in Genesis 1:27 allows for the possibility of male-female equality, female is intended to be a secondary human in service of male as in the account of Genesis 2:22 where female was made out of the rib of male. The hierarchical ranking of humans over nature is more ambivalent. The Hebrew creation account is certainly anthropocentric in that Adam, as collective humanity, was given "dominion" over the rest of creation in Genesis 1:28. At the same time, human control over nonhuman nature is restricted since humanity as "the representative of divine sovereignty" over creation is not allowed to possess and exploit creation but is to care for it in Genesis 2.<sup>9</sup>

A direct connection between women and nature cannot be found here. In the Hebrew view, both humans and nature belong to God's covenant in one creation. Nature is seen as a lower sphere to be taken care of or managed by humans as faithful stewards. But, nature is also seen as the matrix of chaos and cosmos under God's direct control in which God punishes or blesses humans according to their faithfulness to God. In the Hebrew creation story, I see an increasing but more ambivalent connection between women and nature than in the Babylonian account. There is certainly the domination of the patriarchal male as representative of the patriarchal God over the female and nature. And yet, the image of covenant between God, humanity and nature makes this male domination ambivalent.<sup>10</sup>

We find the explicit association between the oppression of women and the domination of nature in the concept of the primal dualism between the invisible realm of spirit and the visible realm of body in the Greek creation story, the *Timaeus*. Ruether sees the radical transcendent dualism between mind and body in this story to be the root of the explicit connection between the domination of women and nature. She thus claims that this mind-body dualism is duplicated in male-female, ruler-worker and human-animal

---

<sup>8</sup> Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 19-22. See also James Barr, "Man and Nature: the Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament," in *Ecology and Religion in History*, ed., by David and Eileen Spring (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 48-75.

<sup>10</sup> Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 207-214.

hierarchies in Greek philosophy.<sup>11</sup> Ruether's historical analysis is support for the growing concept of the connection between women and nature culminating in transcendent dualism in Greek thought. This increasingly ambivalent view of women, nature and the body radically shifts to a negative and hostile view in Greek philosophy. They all are to be controlled, finally released as the source of evil, and eternal salvation will ultimately be found in the escape of the soul from this earthly realm to the transcendent.<sup>12</sup>

Ruether affirms that the human person is unitary,<sup>13</sup> therefore she also sees the mind-body split as the root of world-negating spiritualities, and thus the ecological crisis. She derives this mind-body dualism from "the male ideology of transcendent dualism" which causes us to see others not as subject but as object, to control and dominate. Contrary to some elements of Mother and nature religions found in Babylonian and Canaanite mythologies, which see reality as dialectical built on a natural cycle of death and renewal, patriarchal religion elevates "a male-identified consciousness to transcendent apriority" as is found in all dualisms.

The fall of dialectical interaction into absolute dualism stems from a male-identified consciousness seeking to escape from its own mortality and bodiliness, based on fear of death and the body, which is rooted in the inability to reproduce without women. So the male identifies himself with a transcendent sphere of divine, spirit, mind, culture, while femaleness is identified with the sphere of finitude of earth, matter, body, nature and mortality which should be denied, controlled and dominated.<sup>14</sup>

Locating social domination and the emerging ecological crisis in patriarchal anthropology based on this dualism of mind and body, Ruether relates anthropology to ethics as she seeks an earth-based spirituality and ethics by affirming bodiliness, finitude, the well-being of bodies of all kinds<sup>15</sup> based on the life cycle of death and renewal which the body, especially the female body, represents. This male

---

<sup>11</sup> Ruether states, "The hierarchy of spirit to physical nature as male to female is made explicit. The chain of being, God-spirits-male-female-nonhuman nature-matter, is at the same time the chain of command. The direction of salvation follows the trajectory of alienation of mind from its own physical support system, objectified as 'body' and 'matter.'" Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 79.

<sup>12</sup> Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 22-26.

<sup>13</sup> She grounds her affirmation on a Hebraic and an Aristotelian view of "the soul as the life principle of the body itself," repudiating the Platonic eschatology based on a view of "the soul as capable of being detached from the body and existing in a disembodied form after death." She also affirms the reality of spirit and matter as "the inside and outside of the same thing" referring to the postmodern science and evolutionary view of reality. See her books, *Gaia and God*, 28-29, 38-39; and *Sexism and God-Talk*, 85-87.

<sup>14</sup> Ruether, *New Women / New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury, 1975), 194-95.

<sup>15</sup> Hebrew religion didn't understand mortality as the last enemy to be overcome but as natural. Despite its dualistic view of good and evil in apocalyptic terms, its reference to resurrection was not to overcome mortality but to deal with injustice. It also understood blessedness not as overcoming mortality but as living a whole life focused on the well-being of bodies. See Isaiah 65:20; also Ruether, *Gaia and God*, 71.

ideology of transcendent dualism itself presupposes male/female dualism whereby Ruether sees male domination of female as “the primary psychic model” for other forms of domination.

Unlike Ruether’s primary emphasis on male/female dualism in the male ideology of transcendent dualism, Ortner sees culture/nature dualism as the primary symbol in hierarchical dualism, along with a close connection between women and nature, which is a root cause of both female subordination and ecological disaster. Ruether finds a deeper root than Ortner for the ecological crisis in sexism or androcentrism in anthropocentrism. Whether androcentrism or anthropocentrism came first symbolically or historically, these major forms of domination are interlinked with each other. We cannot adequately criticize the male-female dualism without looking into the culture-nature dualism and vice versa. Therefore, the liberation of humans, especially of oppressed women, cannot be accomplished without the liberation of oppressed nature.

I think Ruether’s claim that the male transcendent consciousness is the conceptual root of various forms of domination seems to be deeper, more complex and adequate than Ortner’s anthropological version of the women-nature connection as universal and cross-cultural. Despite the significant contribution of Ortner’s symbolic connection between women and nature to illuminate the double domination of women and nature, as Ruether rightly indicates, Ortner’s main problem lies in her use of the dualistic definition of “nature” as the opposite and inferior category to culture. It follows that she doesn’t see the women/nature affinity as emancipatory.<sup>16</sup> However, Ruether stresses the conversion from transcendent dualism to dynamic unity as a key factor for overcoming the patterns of domination of women and nature. She calls for “fundamental reconstruction of our basic model of interrelationship... a cooperative model of fellowship of life system”<sup>17</sup> in her seeking an ecofeminist consciousness and symbolic culture and spirituality.

---

<sup>16</sup> There have been hot debates among radical feminists whether the women-nature connection is emancipatory or not. Ynestra King distinguishes between rationalist and cultural approaches to this issue. Radical rationalist feminists reject the women-nature connection because they believe it reinforces gender differences and sexual stereotypes. However, radical cultural feminists see the women-nature connection as potentially emancipatory and thus use women’s experience of the female ghetto as a source of power for women’s struggle for liberation. See Ynestra King, “Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology and the Nature/Culture Dualism,” in Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo (eds.), *Gender/Body/Knowledge/Feminist Reconstruction of Being and Knowledge* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 115-41. Radical cultural feminists, who see the women-nature connection as emancipatory, are Mary Daly, Susan Griffin, Starhawk, Charlene Spretnak. But, with emphasis on social construction of gender, social and socialist feminists (Dorothy Dinnerstein, Karen Warren, Maria Mies, Vandana Shiva) indicate radical cultural feminists’ separatist vision and argue that excessive stress on the women-nature association may disturb women’s liberation. Women and men should be both natural and cultural through the integration of their public and domestic roles. See Rosi Braidotti, et. al., *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994), 59-76.

<sup>17</sup> Ruether, *New Women / New Earth*, 31.

## 2. The Distortion of the I-Thou Relationship between Male and Female into Sexism as Original Sin

As noted above, transcendental dualism is a cultural reversal of the reality that nature is the matrix of all forms of existence. As a way of converting transcendent dualism to dynamic unity, I will look into how human relationality has been distorted into a good-evil ideology -- especially by distorting the I-Thou relationship into sexism that we need to see as original sin. Ruether emphasizes sexism as the underlying social basis of the good-evil ideology.<sup>18</sup> Feminism claims that a fundamental expression of human relationality, the I-Thou relationship between male and female, has been distorted throughout history into an oppressive relationship where men are privileged at the expense of female subjugation; i.e., the hierarchical relationship between male and female is “the primary alienation and distortion of human relationality.”<sup>19</sup>

According to Ruether, the confusion of the self-other dichotomy with the good-evil dualism occurred early in human history. Males as the center of the early tribal group dominantly defined their collective self against other alien groups. The “good self” is identified with “the favored center who dominates the cultural interpretation of humanness,” while the “other” is perceived as inferior and thus their exploitation can be rationalized. For Ruether, evil lies in the process of falsely naming evil; that is, “projection” and “exploitation”<sup>20</sup> distorting human relationality. Evil occurs precisely through “the distortion of the self-other relationship into the good-evil, superior-inferior dualism.”<sup>21</sup>

I have reviewed how the self-other relationships, especially the male-female relationship as primary expression, have also been distorted into good-evil dualism, especially in sexism throughout the history of human consciousness. I agree that evil lies not in something or someone really separated from us, but rather in oppressive relationships where we usually project inferior and evil characteristics onto alien others and then exploit them. Our exploitation is then justified as a means to overcome evil, thereby increasing evil.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 160; *New Women / New Earth*, 157. Ruether writes: “It is the underlying ‘error’ of patriarchal thinking that the dialectics of human existence—male-female, consciousness-body, human-nature—are turned into good-evil dualisms. Moreover, these dualisms of the polarities of human existence scapegoat the ‘evil’ side as ‘female.’”

<sup>19</sup> Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 161.

<sup>20</sup> Ruether describes the two aspects of the ideology of the other as inferior and less valuable: “Projection externalizes the sense of inadequacy and negativity from the dominant group, making the other the cultural ‘carrier’ of these rejected qualities. The dominant group can then rationalize exploitation as the right to reduce the other to a servile condition, abuse, and even kill them on the ground of their lesser value.” *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>21</sup> Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 163.

Ruether defines sexism as one expression of original sin.<sup>22</sup> The social system of male privilege and female subordination into which we are born biases human choice toward evil, distorts human relationality by the men-women dualism, and thus distorts our humanity. Sexism as the exploitation of women's bodies and their full humanity also distorts men's humanity, because women and men can promote their full humanity only in I-Thou relations where they both are treated alike as authentic persons. Men sin more than women, not because men are more sinful and more capable of evil than women, but because men who actually dominate using power and privilege have more opportunity to do evil and on a larger scale. In this system, males sin by oppressing women and other powerless people, while females sin by silencing themselves about their own subjugation, helping to perpetuate it, or by oppressing others more powerless than themselves. Males and females sin differently and thus they are held accountable for their sins in different ways.<sup>23</sup> Ruether sees evil as relational in both personal and social dimensions. Every personal sin occurs in a systemic and social milieu. Sexism is a social condition of sin. It creates a social system based on male privilege and female subordination conditioning all human choices between good and evil. But this givenness doesn't mean that we also are not responsible for it. Humanity created sexism and perpetuates it today. And we have the capacity to choose and avoid evil within the conditions of systemic evil.<sup>24</sup>

### III. The Spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju* as Ecofeminist Relationality

---

<sup>22</sup> The concept of original sin reminds us that we inherit the conditions of sin and evil. We are born into a predisposition to sin in human nature, whatever we call it—pride, unbelief, anxiety, aggression or sensuality. We are also born into distorted social systems that result from the past sin. We are not only predisposed to sin in human nature but also to participate in actual sins with one another and magnify them through the solidarity of human beings and cultural and social systems. We practice our limited freedom within these conditions of sin. This means that nobody is totally innocent of or responsible for these conditions of sin into which we are born. We are also reminded that sin and evil have both individual and social dimensions. The cultural and social systems that we inherit bias personal choice between good and evil. See Suchocki, *Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 82-99.

<sup>23</sup> Feminists argue that the classical notion of sin as pride (and self-giving as its opposite) was it is based on masculine experience does not fully reflect the female dilemma and in fact further aggravates it. For example, in contrast to such masculine forms of sin as pride and will-to-power that reflect mostly male dilemmas, Valerie Saiving defines the feminine forms of sin, which should reflect the female dilemmas, as "triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness; lack of an organizing center or focus; dependence on others for one's own self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason—in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self." See Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminist View," *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*, ed., by Carol P. Christ & Judith Plaskow (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 37; Susan Nelson Dunfee, "The Sin of Hiding," *Soundings* Vol.65 No.3 (Fall 1982): 316-27; Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (New York: University Press of America, 1980), 62-68.

<sup>24</sup> Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, 173-82.



We confirm that sexism is original sin since it usually becomes “the primary psychic model” for other forms of domination existing in broken “distorted human relations” -- both personal and social. In this sense, a conversion from sin, especially from sexism, can also be termed “ecojustice” -- a renewal of our relationships of mutuality, harmony and justice throughout the interdependent web of life. In the Tonghak spirituality of *Si Ch’ŏnju*, these concepts are related to ecofeminist conceptions of interconnectedness and interdependency between all forms of life.

*Si Ch’ŏnju* (侍天主)<sup>25</sup> spirituality represents the dynamic unity of the divine, humanity and nature embedded in the interdependent web of cosmic life. The core of Tonghak<sup>26</sup> (東學) thought is represented in the main sacred formula of thirteen characters. Among them the first three, *Si Ch’ŏnju*, is the essence of this core. As we understand *Si Ch’ŏnju* as reverently serving *Hanullim*, there seems to be a distinction between the subject and the object. While humans and *Hanullim* are distinguished as the subject of serving and the object of being served, they are in union. Humans are *Hanullim* and *Hanullim* are humans (*In nae ch’ŏn*). We will see how this could be.

### 1. *Naeyu Silryŏng* as the Unity of All Forms of Life

The significance of the one character “*Si*” is the key concept for the whole system of Tonghak as a philosophical, religious and socio-political movement. Suun explained the first meaning of *Si* as *Naeyu Silryŏng* (內有神靈) which literally means “Inwardly there is the divine spirit.” I think this is the key to understanding *Naeyu Silryŏng* as the unity of each form of life with the divine spirit. The divine spirit can be named universal nature or spirituality, cosmic life, truth or whatever we call the fundamental source of organic life.<sup>27</sup> *Naeyu Silryŏng* is an inner manifestation of ecological spirituality where the divine spirit is embedded in the nature of every existent.

<sup>25</sup> *Si Ch’ŏnju* is composed of *Si* (a predicate) which literally means “to bear,” “to wait upon” or “to serve” and *Ch’ŏnju* (an object) which means the Heavenly Lord as the catholic term for God. Tonghak prefers to employ the Korean indigenous term, *Hanullim* that corresponds to the Western concept of God. *Hanullim* is very often expressed as *Chi Ki* (the Ultimate Energy) which refers to the divine who is not only a personal being but also a metaphysical principle of the universe.

<sup>26</sup> Tonghak literally means “Eastern Learning” as the opposite concept of *Shak*, “Western Learning,” standing for Roman Catholicism and Western culture in general. Here I take it to mean the Korean indigenous religion, philosophy and movement that Suun founded in 1860 and Haewŏl, the second leader, who embodied it into a way of life and social movement. In 1894 *Tonghak* developed into a socio-political movement called the *Tonghak* movement or revolution under the leadership of *Chŏn Pong -jun*. Since 1905 it has been called *Ch’ŏndogyo*, Religion of the Heavenly Way by Son Pyŏng -hi, the third leader. The term *Tonghak* I use here refers to the religion, spirituality and movement for life which Suun and Haewŏl pursued. For Korean theology of *Tonghak*, see Ho-Ik Hur, “Choi Si-Hyung’s Theory of Sam Kyung and Theocosmoandric Theology,” *Korea Journal of Theology* 27(2003/1), 437-466.

<sup>27</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Tonghak Iyaki* [The Story of Tonghak] (Seoul: Sol, 1994), 20.

Here the universal nature (Mind) is nothing less than the nature (mind) of *Hanullim*. The voice of *Osim chŭk Yŏsim* (吾心即汝心) (My Mind is your mind) that Suun heard from *Hanullim* is the voice heard from the center of his mind at the moment he realized the unity of his nature with universal nature. Suun's realization of *Osim chŭk Yŏsim* is the restoration of his true nature, true mind and true self. The ecological spirituality of *Naeyu Silryŏng* means that the nature of every existence, especially human nature, reaches the nature of the universe, that is, *Osim chŭk Yŏsim*, through the restoration of the cosmic life in the center of his or her existence, that is, the restoration of one's center and life. As noted above, the ecological awareness of *Naeyu Silryŏng* doesn't understand the divine spirit and human mind as individual separate entities but rather as relational and interdependent. Relationality is seen as the basic mode of existence.

The divine spirit that transcends all forms of existence and contemplates the present order of the cosmos and envisions its future order parallels one Western aspect of the divine nature, that is, the divine primordial nature as presented in process metaphysics. Process metaphysics posits the divine nature as dipolar in explaining the relationality of God's creativity and the world's creativity.<sup>28</sup> I see the nature of *Hanullim* as also dipolar: *Naeyu Silryŏng* and *Oeyu Kihwa*. Whitehead's concept of God's primordial nature seems very similar to Suun's understanding of the nature of *Hanullim* as *Naeyu Silryŏng*. In his realization of *Silryŏng* as a mental pole of the divine, I think Suun attempts to describe God's eternal quality in the mental pole as in Whitehead's notion of the divine primordial nature. As God includes all possibilities for all existences in God's primordial nature, *Silryŏng* is the One Great Mind of the universe who envisions the whole order of the universe from its beginning to end.

In process metaphysics, God is conceived as containing all possibilities for all existences in God's divine primordial nature and all possibilities are thus unified in God's primordial vision. This divine primordial nature offers the "initial aim," the best possible option among many possibilities, to every existence. In the process of becoming, every existence adapts God's initial aim as the guiding energy for its own subjective aim. But every existence responds to God's best possible option in freedom. The more

---

<sup>28</sup> Suchocki, *God-Christ-Church*, 246-255; John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), 41-62; Thomas E. Hosinski, *Stubborn Fact and Creative Advance: An Introduction to the Metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993), ch.7-8. God originates in the mental pole and moves from harmonious unity of all possibilities in the world. From the nontemporality of possibilities, Whitehead derives the eternal nature of God that contains all possibilities in its nature. Whitehead calls this eternal quality of the mental pole of this unique entity the "primordial nature" of God. God, who begins in primordial satisfaction, moves toward the physical feeling of the world. This is the second phase of God's subjective aim which directs the concrescence of God. Whitehead calls the physical pole in God the divine "consequent nature," since God's physical feeling of the world is consequent upon God's primordial beginning.

we adapt God's initial aim into our subjective aim, the closer we come to God's primordial nature, and vice versa. The unity of our subjective aim with God's initial aim, I think, implies a similarity with the ecological significance of *Naeyu Silryŏng* as the unity of our mind with the mind of *Hanullim*. Suun's realization of *Osim chŭk Yŏsim* is at the moment of his religious experience of *Hanullim*. For Suun *Naeyu Silryŏng* as an inner aspect of the nature of *Hanullim* stresses the unity of every existence with the mind of *Hanullim* (*Silryŏng*) which represents the nature or the principle of the cosmos.

## 2. *Oeyu Kihwa* as the Diversity of All Forms of Life

The second meaning of *Si*, *Oeyu Kihwa* (外有氣化) literally means "Outwardly there is a flow of energy." *Oeyu Kihwa* stresses the diversity or interconnectedness of all existences within the One Energy of the universe (*Ki* 氣); *Naeyu Silryŏng* focuses on the unity of all existences in the divine spirit. The former expresses the outer relations of *Hanullim* to all things in the network of life and the latter describes the inner relations of *Hanullim* to everything in the universe. While *Silryŏng* is the mind of *Hanullim*, *Kihwa* is the energy of *Hanullim*. *Naeyu Silryŏng* is the inner activity of the mind of *Hanullim*; *Oeyu Kihwa* is the outer movement of the energy of *Hanullim*.

The movement of *Hanullim* into the world, termed *Kihwa*, parallels the consequent nature of the divine in process metaphysics. As the divine consequent nature features the physical pole of God, *Kihwa* characterizes the physical pole of *Hanullim* in which all things are generated, changed, extended and converge. The physical pole of *Hanullim* is nothing less than the flow of *Ki* -- the network of life featuring the cycles, the relatedness and the interdependence of all actualities in the universe. The physical pole of *Hanullim*, that is, *Kihwa*, represents the order of becoming in which all actualities are prehended by *Hanullim*. *Hanullim*'s feeling toward the world is all-inclusive because *Hanullim* is the network of life and the flow of *Chiki* itself. We call it the "cosmic life." *Hanullim* also integrates one's prehensions of the world into the center of one's mind, called *Silryŏng*. *Hanullim* begins in one's inner nature or *Silryŏng* that contains all possibilities in the world and moves toward the world and feels all actualities in one's outer nature, and *Kihwa* also integrates them into *Silryŏng*. The dynamic integration of *Silryŏng* and *Kihwa* in *Hanullim* intensifies the possibilities of the world to which all existences respond in their freedom. This dynamic of relational existence is very similar to the dynamic process concept in metaphysics.

In this sense, *Naeyu Silryŏng* and *Oeyu Kihwa* are just the inner and outer aspects of the one activity of *Hanullim* in the process of natural becoming (*Muwi Ihwa* 無爲而化)<sup>29</sup>, and they lead to the ontological interconnectedness and interdependency of all existences in the biotic community. *Silryŏng* or *Kihwa* do not exist or work alone because they are interdependent with one another. They feature the interaction of the divine transcendence and divine immanence with the universe. Suun criticized *Sŏhak* (Roman Catholicism) for its lack of *Naeyu Silryŏng*:

Since they [Western Christians] say that the *Sangje* of Heaven [*Hanullim*] dwells in *Okkyŏngdae* [corresponds to the Heaven of Christianity as opposed to Hell], Suun says it is vain words, not to mention the principle of *Yin* and *Yang*.<sup>30</sup>

Here Suun certainly critiques the rootless transcendence of the divine as conceived in the concept of the male, monotheistic, Judeo-Christian view of God as “Sky-Father” based on the dualistic and hierarchical view of reality as the transcendent Mind over and against inferior physical nature. The inner aspect of *Hanullim* as *Naeyu Silryŏng* features the immanence of the transcendent *Silryŏng* (the Divine Spirit) in every individual existence. The significance of *Naeyu Silryŏng* is that the transcendent Mind of *Hanullim* is immanent at the center of every existence. This also means that *Hanullim* is not a separate Being apart from each existence, but rather is inseparably related to every existence as the source of its very nature.

Suun also criticized *Sŏhak* (Roman Catholicism) for the lack of *Oeyu Kihwa* where he explained the difference between *Tonghak* and *Sŏhak*:

The Way of *Hanullim* is *Muwi Ihwa* (the process of natural becoming). So, if you keep the Mind of *Hanullim* (*Silryŏng*), and have and practice the right Energy (*Ki*), and you take care of the Nature of *Hanullim*, and receive instruction from *Hanullim*, the creation (*Chohwa*) of *Hanullim* is achieved by nature. But, in *Sŏhak* there are no words in which to realize the order and principle of the universe, and no distinction between right and wrong. There is no public mind (altruism) to care for *Hanullim* but rather, only expressing selfishness in prayer to *Hanullim* for their own body. Therefore, there is no the spirit of *Kihwa* in their body.<sup>31</sup>

As Suun critiques the lack of both *Silryŏng* and *Kihwa* in *Sŏhak*, he stresses that there is also no *Kihwa* of *Silryŏng*, that is, the activity of the mind of *Hanullim* in every embodied existence. The separation between the mind of *Hanullim* and human minds necessarily leads to selfish desire. Here, the energy of *Kihwa* means the outer activity of the mind of *Hanullim*. *Oeyu Kihwa* describes the outward

<sup>29</sup> Suun describes *Silryŏng* as transcendent as he sees *Silryŏng* as the nature of the universe, that is, *Muwi Ihwa* that denotes the process of natural becoming. *Silryŏng* is the principle, the source or the power of *Muwi Ihwa*, the evolutionary process of the biotic community. No existence must go against the natural becoming of *Muwi Ihwa* as the life of the universe. The distortion of relationality through exploitation and oppression of other forms of life is a manifestation of human-centered negligence or the violation of ecological living of *Muwi Ihwa*.

<sup>30</sup> “Todŏkga” [A Song of Morality] in Yun Sŏk-san, annot., *Yongdamyusa* (Seoul: Tonghak-sa, 2000), 207-11.

<sup>31</sup> “Nonhangmun,” in Yun Sŏk-san, annot., *Tonggyŏng Daejŏn*, 71-76.

disclosure of this movement working in all things in the universe and features their diversity in the interdependent network of the cosmic life.

### 3. *Kihwa of Silryǒng as the Interconnectedness of All Forms of Life in Chiki*

Suun describes the interaction of *Silryǒng* and *Kihwa*. *Oeyu Kihwa* is what Suun experienced at his religious awakening, that is, “outwardly there was the energy (*Ki*) which allowed contact with the mysterious spirit” (*Silryǒng*). Kim Chi-ha describes the dynamic unity of the mind and the energy of *Hanullim* as the movement of *Kihwa* of *Silryǒng*, or *SinKi*. He sees this movement as the boundless activity of the cosmic life, i.e., revealed through all forms of work, natural cycles, creation, extension, repetition, unity and convergence coming together in human history. He defines the meaning of *Chi*, that is, *Oeyu Kihwa* as “letting this cosmic life work by its nature.”<sup>32</sup> Here, Kim identifies the cosmic life with *Ki* (氣 the energy), *SinKi* (神氣 the divine energy) or *Chiki* (至氣 the Ultimate Energy).

Kim explains that *Ki* is the life energy that is clearly revealed through the life cycles of generation, disintegration and renewal. He sees *Ki* as both an infinitesimal element in visible matter and the total invisible flow of the whole universe. This allows for a dynamic unity of matter and spirit, body and mind, the part and the whole. In *Ki*, the great web of life of the universe and its movement through all forms of life become interrelated and interdependent with each other in the process of becoming which then is both invisible and foundational in the universe. *Ki* is the movement and activity of the unified cosmic life that integrates mind and matter, soul and body. This Tonghak organic worldview of *Ki* is an ecological alternative to the Western dualistic view of reality rooted in materialism and idealism.<sup>33</sup>

As noted above, *Silryǒng* and *Kihwa* as the inner and outer aspects of *Hanullim* are not two separate beings, instead they are the one infinite becoming entity itself. Suun saw the whole process of becoming of all things in the universe in the dynamic interaction between *Silryǒng* and *Kihwa* as the endlessly changing movement of *Chiki*. He explained *Chiki*:

*Chi* means to reach the extreme, *ChiKi* [which denotes *Ki* that reaches its limit] is (1) completely empty and spiritual and yet full in the universe. (2) Since there is nothing it never intervenes and orders, (3) it seems to have a shape but it is difficult to discern it, and it seems to be heard but it is difficult to see. (4) This refers to *Honwon Ilki* (one energy of the universe).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Tonghak Iyaki* [The Story of Tonghak], 21.

<sup>33</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Saengmyǒng kwa Chach'i* [Life and Autonomy] (Seoul: Sol, 1996), 58-75.

<sup>34</sup> “Nonhangmun,” in Yun Sŏk-san, annot., *Tonggyǒng Daejŏn*, 80-82.

Paek Se-Myŏng interpreted Suun's first description of *ChiKi* as referring to the primal matrix of all existences from which each individual is differentiated; the second describes the process of differentiation of each individual as the result of the work of *ChiKi*. The third means that we cannot grasp its fundamental principle in isolation from the individual or by separating it from all interrelated things in the universe. The fourth meaning, that is, *Honwon Ilki* (混元一氣), stresses that we grasp the foundational principle of the universe, as well as a thing in itself, only when we see a thing as a part of the flow of the energy in relation to *ChiKi* as the primal matrix of the universe.<sup>35</sup>

As noted above, Suun's world view of *ChiKi* or *Honwon Ilki* clearly asserts the interrelatedness and becoming of reality stressing the interdependence of each individual existence in one network of life, that is, *ChiKi* in which all things are continuously generated, changed, disintegrated and renewed. In Ruether's terms, *ChiKi* is also seen as "the Primal Matrix," "the Matrix of life," or "the great womb" from which all life-forms are born and to which they return in the ever changing continuity of infinite creativity.<sup>36</sup> Here, *Ki* obviously refers not to a substantial being which is separable and self-sufficient, but rather to a mysterious energy of life that is unintelligible, indescribable and invisible.

Kim Chi-ha identifies the extreme *Ki*, that is, *ChiKi* with the chaotic *Ki* in the beginning of the universe which, I think, parallels the preexisting force of chaos found in the Babylonian and Hebrew creation stories. But, *ChiKi* is not a kind of primal stuff of the cosmos in coexistence with the Creator as in these stories, but is the matrix or the foundational energy of life. Suun described the activity or flow of this chaotic *Ki* as *Kung Kung*. Kim stresses the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things in the flow of this mysterious *Ki* in terms of the theory of *SinKi*. As *Ki*, which changes, moves, converges and extends within my existence, it meets and communicates with *Ki* in others, and we move into the depth of the divine spirit. He expresses this movement of *Ki* or the cosmic life as the spirituality of love, fellowship and reconciliation. For him, *Oeyu Kihwa* as the creative ongoing movement of change, convergence and extension of *Ki* implies a community of cooperation, symbiosis and interdependence.<sup>37</sup> O Mun-hwan also understands *Oeyu Kihwa* as "original or universal communality," "public unity," and

---

35 Quoted by O Mun-hwan, *Sarami Hanŭlida* [Humanity is Heaven] (Seoul: Sol, 1996), 71 from Paek Se-Myŏng, *Ch'ŏndogyo ŭi Uchukwan, Insaengkwan, Chongkyokwan* [The Cosmology, Anthropology and Religion of Ch'ŏndogyo].

36 Ruether, *Sexism and God*, 48-52; *Gaia and God*, 253.

37 Kim Chi-ha, *Saengmyŏng kwa Chach'i* [Life and Autonomy], 128-29, 346.

“social relationality.” This awakens in us the interrelatedness of all variety of things united in the one flux of *Ki*. The ongoing creative activity of one *Ki* finds expression in a myriad of diverse forms.<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, the notion of *Chiki* reveals a distinction from them in Suun’s unique thought of *Hanullim* and *Si Ch’ŏnju*. *Hanullim* as *Chiki* is not simply the material force, that is, the natural process of becoming (*Kihwa*) but also a personal Being as the Divine Spirit (*Silryŏng*) who transcends and mediates the order of the universe. *Hanullim* is both an immanent and impersonal becoming (*Kihwa*) and a transcendent and personal being (*Silryŏng*). Tonghak describes such *Hanullim* as a Being and a Becoming *Chiki*, *Sinki*, *Silryŏng* of *Kihwa* in distinction from *Sŏhak*’s monotheistic view of God.<sup>39</sup> As noted above, *Si Ch’ŏnju* thought helps us see *Hanullim* not only as an impersonal natural Becoming and the source of the natural order, but also as a personal spiritual Being whom we respect and serve.<sup>40</sup> *Hanullim* as *Chiki* is not simply the material energy (*Kihwa*) as the source and the principle of the universe, but it also is the divine spirit (*Silryŏng*) who has a personal relationship (I-Thou) with all creatures, especially with humans. In Ruether’s terms, *Hanullim* is not only “the Primal Matrix of life” and “the great womb” of the universe but is also “the Great Thou,” “the personal center” of creative becoming. We have discussed the metaphysical implications of *Si Ch’ŏnju* in terms of its first meaning (*Naeyu Silryŏng*), and its second meaning (*Oeyu Kihwa*), and then we have affirmed the ecofeminist relationality characteristics of *Si Ch’ŏnju* as the unity and diversity of all forms of life in the interdependent network of *Chiki*.

#### IV. Toward A Tonghak Ecofeminist Community of Ecojustice

In this concluding section, I will envision a Tonghak ecofeminist community of ecojustice by combining the third meaning of *Si Ch’ŏnju*, *Kagji Pulii* and the ecofeminist spirituality of eco-justice. While *Naeyu Silryŏng* and *Oeyu Kihwa* gave us metaphysical implications of ecological relationality, *Kagji Puli* provides us with ethical implications for ecojustice.

---

38 O Mun-hwan, *Sarami Hanŭlida* [Humanity is Heaven], 68-74.

39 Lee Jung-bae calls Tonghak’s view of *Chiki* a Korean *Ki* monistic panentheism. Lee Jung-bae, *Hankuk chŏk Saengmyŏng Sinhak* [Korean Theology of Life] (Seoul: Kamsin Publisher, 1996), 123-50. Kim Kyŏng-jae also sees Tonghak’s notion of *Hanullim* as *Chiki* monistic naturalistic view of God which means panentheism; see his article, “Choi Sunn’s view of the divine,” in *Tonghak Sasang kwa Tonghak Hyŏngmyŏng* [Tonghak Thought and Tonghak Revolution], 125-141.

<sup>40</sup> Suun describes a personal characteristic of *Hanullim* as he says that we should reverently serve (*chi*) *Hanullim* as parents; “Nonhangmun,” in Yun Sŏk-san, annot., *Tonggyŏng Daejŏn*, 84-85. Suun’s explanation of *Hanullim* in his words, *Musapulsŏb Musapulmyŏng* (there is nothing, *Chiki* never intervenes and orders) also clearly demonstrates the personal characteristics of *Hanullim*. His religious experience of *Osim chŭk Yŏsim* that he heard from *Hanullim* also reveals the personal relationship between *Hanullim* and Suun.

## 1. *Kagji Pulii* as Ethical Implications of Ecojustice

The literal meaning of *Kagji Puli* (各知不移) is that “each existence knows that one must not remove.”<sup>41</sup> The explanation of each syllable of these words will help us clarify the ethical implications of *Kagji Puli*. Here “*Kag*” indicates each specific existence conditioned by its particular circumstances in the spatio-temporal continuum. While *Silryōng* and *Kihwa* signify the universality of *Hanullim* as the cosmic life, *Kag* demonstrates the particularity and individuality of an embodied cosmic life. In this sense, *Hanullim* means both the universal and the particular life. The core meaning of *Si Ch'ōnju* lies in the nature of life—the universality and the particularity, the unity and the diversity, the interdependence and the individuality—and its ethical implications for human relationality.

The second word, *Ji* means to “know.” Here “knowing” is not simply grasping the order of the visible world (*Kiyōn*) through common sense or scientific and mathematical reasoning, but also is able to make real or concrete the order of the invisible world (*Pulyōn*) thorough human intuition, revelation and spiritual awareness. This awareness is, however, always based in its particular context. Ecological spirituality is not an escape from this world to the other world in search for disembodied truth. Rather it is the awakened knowledge of the order of *Pulyōn*, the nature of life within the world of *Kiyōn*. Tonghak’s “knowing” is to realize the Way of *Hanullim* (*Muwi Ihwa*), that is, the creative process of becoming based on “practical rationality,” or “practical wisdom.”<sup>42</sup> Kim Chi-ha calls this ecological knowing “real life as knowing,” that is, the unity of life and knowledge.<sup>43</sup> That is, it is to grasp and appreciate the unity of each existence with *Hanullim* (*Silryōng*) and to practice the interdependent relationship of all things (*Kihwa*) in the dynamic process of unity and differentiation, integration and disintegration of *Chiki*.

The third word, *Pul* means “not” and the last word, *I* denotes “to remove.” The combined words, *Puli* literally means “not move” or “not to remove.” It is ones’ nature that each existence must not remove oneself from the order of the universe, that is, from the source of life (*Silryōng*) and its ecological relationality (*Kihwa*). *Kagji Puli* implies that each person knows that one must not remove oneself and others from the nature of *Hanullim*. *Kagji Puli* is *not* a human option but it is a human responsibility or obligation. Kim sees *Kagji Puli* as “the principle of [ecological] community” and the basic principle of

<sup>41</sup> “Nonhangmun,” in Yun Sōk-san, annot., *Tonggyōng Daejōn*, 83-84.

<sup>42</sup> MaFague values a form of practical rationality in higher animals based on feeling or intuition and criticizes as groundless the human supremacy claim based on mathematical rationality. MaFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 120; Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), 255-56.

<sup>43</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Tonghak Iyaki* [The Story of Tonghak] (Seoul: Sol, 1994), 25.



ecology.<sup>44</sup> I further argue that while *Muwi Ihwa* means the creative process of natural becoming as the descriptive principle of ecology, *Kagji Puli* describes the normative principle of ecology that we must follow. In other words, *Kagji Puli* stresses the ethical aspect of the ecological principle of the universe found in the interaction of *Naeyu Silryŏng* with *Oeyu Kihwa* providing a metaphysical and spiritual awareness of *Muwi Ihwa*. That is, *Kagji Puli* is ethical practice that realizes ecological relationality in the biotic community. The embodied ecological ethic of *Si Chŏnju*, i.e., *Kagji Puli*, obviously features ecological justice as it stresses the practice of *Puli* (e.g., not disturbing or destroying the cosmic life in a negative sense, and caring and nurturing in a positive sense).

## 2. A Tonghak Ecofeminist Spirituality of *Kagji Puli* and Ecojustice

Now we demonstrate how the Tonghak spirituality of *Kagji Puli* and the ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice reinforce each other in building a Tonghak Ecofeminist community of earth-healing based on the inseparable principles of ecology and justice.

I explore the ecofeminist ethical aspect of ecojustice in terms of the Tonghak spirituality of *Kagji Puli*. The unity and diversity of all things in the interdependent network of the cosmic life, and its ethical practice found in Tonghak's ecological sensibility of *Si Chŏnju*, clearly reveal the inseparable relationship between ecology and justice. Ecojustice<sup>45</sup> issues necessarily arise out of tension between the awareness of the necessity of a proper space for basic necessities and the limited resources available in the biotic community. All should share the finite earth fairly to meet their basic needs. When we experience unfairness in having access to environmental goods and we experience burdens in our particular living space, a justice issue arises out of our daily living.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Saengmyŏng* [Life] (Seoul; Sol, 1994), 62.

<sup>45</sup> The Ecojustice Movement traces its history back to the International Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 in which there was an early confrontation between the environmentalists from the rich nations and the representatives of poor nations. The first group stressed limits on economic growth for the sake of environmental protection, while the poor nations opposed it by maintaining that a slowdown or halt of economic growth would intensify the growing gap between rich and poor and make the poor more impoverished under unjust social structures of power and distribution. For the dilemma between ecological and justice issues raised early in 1970, see Norman Faramelli's article "Ecological Responsibility and Economic Justice: The Perilous Links Between Ecology and Poverty," *Andover Newton Quarterly* 2 no.2 (1970): 85-92. He said that choosing either ecology or justice is a bad choice. We must combine both ecological and justice issues in the movement of ecojustice, knowing that one cannot be justly dealt with without the other. See also David G. Hallman, ed., *Ecotheology: Voices From South and North* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994); Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> For this unfair situation of human ecological responsibility and environmental damage in the global capitalistic military economic system, see Rosemary Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005); Bunyon Bryant and Paul Mohai, eds. *Environmental Racism: Issues and Dilemmas*, A collection of papers from a University of Michigan Symposium (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991); Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (Boulder, Colorado:

Ecological justice issues emerge when ecological and social problems are interrelated with each other.<sup>47</sup> Environmental issues cannot be adequately dealt with without reordering the present social system of domination, such as racism, sexism, classism, industrial capitalism<sup>48</sup> based on growth without limit. Ecological issues (e.g., global warming, pollution, population explosion and the energy crisis) also become social issues, derived from unjustly applied power over production, distribution, and use of natural resources for human needs. Likewise, Tonghak's embodied spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju*, which features the unity of each particular human existence with *Hanullim* and one's consequent equality (*Silryŏng*), and also one's responsibility and freedom (*Kagji Pulŭ*) in the ecological community (*Kihwa*), must consider the justice issue as a central issue from an ecological context.

Justice issues between human beings always also reveal ecological issues between humans and the rest of nature. These ecological issues between human species and other species become justice issues when not only humans, but also other life-forms, need sufficient space or habitat to meet their basic needs. Justice between our kin is a necessary condition for justice between our species and other species. Therefore, eco-justice encompasses the well-being of the whole creation, because the well-being of humans is inseparably interlinked with the well-being of the earth. This justice is involved throughout the constant dynamic process of fusion and diffusion of the cosmic life, *Chiki*, which always involves eco-justice because all life-forms are inseparably interdependent with each other in the unity of being and nonbeing.

### 3. A Tonghak Ecofeminist Community of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk*

The ecological spirituality and movement of *Si Ch'ŏnju* leads to the realization of the ecological community of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk*.<sup>49</sup> This is achieved through the spiritual restoration of one's true self and

---

Western Press, 1990); Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1989).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Hofrichter, ed. *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993), 4.

<sup>48</sup> Given enduring conflict between the society and environment, between "the political-economic system" and between "the global environmental and social justice, Allen Schnaiberg finds its core cause for this conflict in the inherent logic of the capitalist political-economic system as a social construction rather than in the Western dualistic culture and spirituality. See his book, *Environment and Society: the Enduring Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

<sup>49</sup> In Tonghak, it is said that the change of the whole order of the universe, that is, *Kaebŏk* (開闢) occurs every 50,000 years in the history of the universe. *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk* (後天開闢) signifies the radical transformation of the old order of the former heaven (*Sŏnch'ŏn* 先天) into the new order of the latter heaven (*Huch'ŏn* 後天) entailing a total renewal of human order and civilization. This seems like the apocalyptic vision of the new heaven and the new earth in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Unlike the Christian apocalyptic, however, *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk* is a natural, historical and ethical dynamic event. It occurs in this world through humanity's self-awakened ethical practice of *Si*

the social transformation of all destructive patterns of human relationality bringing about a relationship of mutuality, justice and harmony in the biotic community. The ecological community of the cosmic life envisions a natural unity of humanity and the universe (*Si Ch'ŏnju*), the social unity of humanity with each other (*Yang Ch'ŏnju*), and the revolutionary unity of humanity and society (*Ch'e Ch'ŏnju*).<sup>50</sup> The ecological spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju*, especially the ethical aspect (*Kagji Puli*) of *Naeyu Silryŏng* and *Oeyu Kihwa*, has been ethically and politically embodied in Haewŏl's *Yang Ch'ŏnju* (養天主) and Uiam's *Ch'e Ch'ŏnju* (體天主).

For Haewŏl, serving *Hanullim* (*Si Ch'ŏnju*) means to actively raise and nurture *Hanullim* (*Yang Ch'ŏnju*) who dwells and works in every existence. This means that no life should be removed from the cosmic life, nor should it be abused, oppressed and starved. Haewŏl actively develops an ethical practice of *Puli* into raising the cosmic life by feeding it on *Pab* (rice). Haewŏl said, "Knowing all things lies in eating a bowl of rice (萬事知 一食碗)." This means that a bowl of rice is the eternal truth. Here rice is the metaphor for "the activity of life itself" or "its result." A bowl of rice is the outcome of the cooperative work of all forms of life in the universe, that is, the result of the work of *Hanullim*, the cosmic life. When we nurture *Hanullim* within us with rice, this means that we return the work of cosmic life and its results to the subjects who participated in the work of *Hanullim*. Haewŏl expressed this principle of the food chain in his words: "*Hanullim* eats *Hanullim* (以天食天)." Not only humans but all life-forms in the creativity of the cosmic life become *Hanullim*. This means that a life eats another life. And yet, when life eats life, a life eats one's food from another life's margin (*Yŏbaek* 餘白) and reproduces oneself and then produces a lavish margin around itself for other lives to eat.<sup>51</sup>

Uiam developed Suun's *Si Ch'ŏnju* and Haewŏl's *Yang Ch'ŏnju* into a thought of *Ch'e Ch'ŏnju* (a socio-political-economic embodiment of serving and nurturing *Hanullim*). Uiam's revolutionary unity of humanity and society clearly finds expression in his ideas of *Sipmuch'ŏn* (十母天) (Tonghak's ten

---

*Ch'ŏnju* with its ensuing social transformation in accordance with the creative process of becoming in the universe. Kim chi-ha identifies the sign of *Huch'ŏn Kaebryŏk* predicted by Suun with our contemporary ecological catastrophes as he distinguishes the order of *Huch'ŏn* (the culture of life) from the order of *Sŏnch'ŏn* (the culture of killing) found in all forms of domination and environmental disasters. See his book, *Saengmyŏng* [Life], Ibid., 17-27.

<sup>50</sup> Ch'oe Si-hyŏng (his pen name, Haewŏl), the second leader of Tonghak developed Suun's spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju* into practical philosophy or social movement of *Yang Ch'ŏnju* (nurturing *Hanullim*). Son Pŏng -hi (his pen name, Uiam), the third leader developed it into socio-political transforming movement of *Ch'e Ch'ŏnju* (embodying *Hanullim*).

<sup>51</sup> Kim Chi-ha, *Pab* [Rice] (Seoul: Seoul, 1995), 61-83.

commandments) and *Samchǒnlon* (三戰論) (The theory of three battles or struggles).<sup>52</sup> While *Sipmuch'ŏn* is a negative ethical practice of *Kagji Puli*, *Samchǒnlon* is a moral, psychological, political and economic struggle for *Kagji Puli* in a positive sense. In the spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju*, Suun declared the natural unity of humanity and the universe by stressing the restoration of the nature of the universe in every self (*Silryōng*), and one's realization of the communality of the universe (*Oeyu Kihwa*) through one's ethical practice of these two (*Kagji Puli*). Haewŏl declared the social unity of human beings with each other by extending Suun's individual ethical practice of *Kagji Puli* to social dimensions in his thought of *Yang Ch'ŏnju*. Uiam declared the revolutionary unity of humans and society by extending Haewŏl's social dimensions to socio-political-economic structures in his discussions on *Ch'e Ch'ŏnju*.

*Si Ch'ŏnju*, *Yang Ch'ŏnju*, and *Ch'e Ch'ŏnju* are interrelated with each other in serving, nurturing and embodying the cosmic life, providing us with ecological spirituality and movement in all individual, social and political dimensions in which we are the most self-conscious and responsible life-forms participating in the ongoing creativity of *Hanullim*, that is, the dynamic process of the integration and disintegration of *Chiki*. We, who are the most spiritual and social existents, and who are conscious of both the individual center of our life and the social nature of the cosmic life, now must decide whether we continue our self-centered life-destroying spirituality and culture only for our benefit, or whether we practice ecological spirituality and participate in the dynamic interrelationships of life in the universe and can share in the Great Mind of the universe when it serves *Hanullim*, the cosmic life in itself. Most of all, human existence is *Hanullim* in the sense that one becomes aware of the nature of *Hanullim* as the best way as one participates in the work of the cosmic life and takes moral responsibility for the ecological community of cosmic life as well as appreciating the mystery and wonder of the cosmic life.

## V. Conclusions

This paper aims to develop and outline a Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice as a way of dealing with our contemporary ecological devastation. Drawing from Ruether's ecofeminist insights, I explored the interconnection between all forms of dominations, specifically the oppression of women and

---

<sup>52</sup> *Sipmuch'ŏn* is as follows: You shall not deceive, disregard, hurt, confuse, kill, blemish, starve, destroy, hate and oppress *Hanullim*. *Samchǒnlon* consists of *Dochǒn* (道戰 a moral struggle), *Chaechǒn* (財戰 a socio-economic struggle) and *Ōnchǒn* (言戰 a linguistic and psychological struggle). Tonghak's socio-political revolutionary movement was clearly revealed in the Tonghak peasant revolution led by *ŏnChong* (翁充) -jun and the Korean 1919 (*Samil*) Independence Movement led by Son Pyōng-hi (Uiam), see Noh Tae-gu, ed., *Tonghak Hyōngmyōng ui Yōngu* [Study on Tonghak Revolution] (Seoul: Paeksan Sōdang, 1982); Il-Cheol Shin, et al., *Tonghak Sasang Kwa Tonghak Hyōngmyōng* [Tonghak Thought and Tonghak Revolution] (Seoul: Chong-a Publishers, 2000).

the domination of nature throughout the history of culture and then I traced the deeper root for these double dominations in male transcendent dualism which is the reversal of natural reality. I examined the process of the reversal of this natural reality in the Babylonian, Hebrew and Greek creation stories, and then I confirmed that Ruether's ecofeminist view of male transcendent dualism describes the conceptual root of various forms of domination as deeper, more complex and appropriate than Ortner's anthropological notion of a women-nature connection as a universal phenomenon. The basic error of this male transcendent consciousness is the distortion of the dialectics of human existence into good-evil dualisms, particularly, sexism. I thus came to understand transcendent dualism, especially sexism, as a primary expression of the distorted relationships that are the key cultural roots for all forms of dominations.

And then I moved from discussing sexism as original sin in these distorted relationships to contrasting earth healing in the conversion from transcendent dualisms to mutual interdependency for the well-being of the earth community. As a way of earth-healing, I attempted to build a Tonghak ecofeminist relationality as I examined the metaphysical implications of *Si Chŏnju* in terms of its first meaning (*Naeyu Silryŏng*) as the inward aspect of *Hanullim* and its second meaning (*Oeyu Kihwa*) as the outward aspect of *Hanullim*. I saw the ecological insight of *Naeyu Silryŏng* as the radical unity of all things in the mind of *Hanullim*, that of *Oeyu Kihwa* as the diversity of all forms of existence in the energy of *Hanullim*, and then the interaction between *Silryŏng* and *Kihwa* as the radical interdependence of all forms of life in the dynamic process of fusion and diffusion of *Chiki*. I confirmed that a Tonghak Ecofeminist relationality stresses the radical unity (*Naeyu Silryŏng*) and diversity (*Oeyu Kihwa*) of all things operating in the interdependent web of the cosmic life.

I also envisioned a Tonghak ecofeminist community of ecojustice by integrating the third meaning of *Si Chŏnju*, that is, *Kagji Puli* with its ethical implications along with the ecofeminist notion of ecojustice. I regarded *Kagji Puli* as ethical practice that realizes ecological relationality in the interaction of *Silryŏng* and *Kihwa* in the biotic community. Its ecological significance helped me to identify the overall global crisis as not only ecological but also filled with social justice issues. As I located the vision of Tonghak ecojustice in the interdependent community of the cosmic life, I asserted that *Kagji Puli* is the normative principle of ecological community by which we must abide.

I connected a Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice with a Tonghak ecofeminist eschatological vision of *Huch'ŏn Kaebryŏk*. A Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice aims to bring

a Tonghak ecofeminist eschatological vision of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk* to our biotic community. In the dynamic processes of the cosmic life, humanity has a foretaste of the eschatological vision of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk* in both the events of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and in the Tonghak revolution in the past, and also brings this vision into the here and now by serving (*Si Ch'ŏnju*), nurturing (*Yang Ch'ŏnju*) and embodying (*Ch'e Ch'ŏnju*) *Hanullim*. In other words, a Tonghak ecofeminist eschatological vision of *Huch'ŏn Kaebŏk* lies not in an ascetic or apocalyptic approach to the human dilemma, but rather in *transforming* the social and cultural patterns of domination that disturb and destroy the dynamic process of the unity and diversity in the interdependent web of the cosmic life.

Ruether's ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice and Tonghak's spirituality of *Si Ch'ŏnju* have some similarities and unique differences in their understanding of humanity, the world, and the divine in which they can deepen and strengthen each other. There are similarities in Tonghak and ecofeminism in that they share an ecological, relational, evolutionary and embodied view of reality. But, there are some differences in that while ecofeminism is gender-specific and historical, Tonghak spirituality is gender-neutral and metaphysical. In this sense, Tonghak metaphysics could be more embodied in the ecofeminist gender-based historical analysis of the interconnection of the double dominations, the transcendent dualism and sexism as their cultural roots. I define Tonghak metaphysics as an ecology-based metaphysic that sees reality as the creative process of the fusion and diffusion of *Chiki* in the biotic community. I also think the ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice can be radicalized by a Tonghak metaphysic of the ontological interdependence of all forms of life. In short, a Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice could provide us with a better alternative to the Western hierarchical spirituality by integrating each other's ecological insights in terms of the metaphysical and socio-cultural analysis of the relations of the divine, humanity and nature.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Carol J., ed. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. New York: Continuum, 1993.
- Barr, James. "Man and Nature: The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament." Eds. David and Eileen Spring. *Ecology and Religion in History*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Braidotti, Rosi et. al. *Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development: Toward a Theoretical Synthesis*. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1994.

- Bryant, Bunyon and Paul Mohai, eds. *Environmental Racism: Issues and Dilemmas*, A collection of papers from a University of Michigan Symposium. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991.
- Bullard, Robert D. *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*. Boulder, Colorado: Western Press, 1990.
- Chang, Yoon-Jae. "Ecofeminism and Ecofeminist Theologies: Toward a More Holistic Theory and Praxis," *Korea Journal of Christian Studies* 39 (2005/5), 113-130.
- Ch'oe, Che-u. "Nonhangmun" [Writing on Discussing Learning]. Annot. Yun Sök-san. *Tonggyöng Daejŏn (The Great Scripture of East)*. Seoul: Tonghak-sa, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Pulyŏn Kiyŏn" [It is not and It is]. *Tonggyöng Daejŏn*.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Todŏkga" [A Song of Morality]. *Yongdamyusa*.
- Christ, Carol P. & Judith Plaskow, ed. *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.
- Cobb, John B., Jr. and David Ray Griffin. *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976.
- Diamond, Irene and Gloria F. Orenstein, eds. *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990.
- Dunfee, Susan Nelson. "The Sin of Hiding." *Soundings* Vol.65 No.3 (Fall 1982): 316-27.
- Faramelli, Norman. "Ecological Responsibility and Economic Justice: The Perilous Links Between Ecology and Poverty." *Andover Newton Quarterly* 2 no.2 (1970): 85-92.
- Gaard, Greta. *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
- Hallman, David G. ed. *Ecotheology: Voices From South and North*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Hofrichter, Richard, ed. *Toxic Struggles: The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993.
- Hosinski, Thomas E. *Stubborn Fact and Creative Advance: An Introduction to the Metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993.
- Hur, Ho-Ik. "Choi Si-Hyung's Theory of Sam Kyung and Theocosmoandric Theology." *Korea Journal of Theology* 27(2003/1), 437-466.
- Jaggar, Alison M. and Susan R. Bordo, eds. *Gender/ Body/ Knowledge/ Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.
- Kim, Chi-ha. *Pab [Rice]*. Seoul: Seoul, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Saengmyöng [Life]*. Seoul: Sol, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Saengmyöng kwa Chach'ŭl [Life and Autonomy]*. Seoul: Sol, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tonghak Iyaki [The Story of Tonghak]*. Seoul: Sol, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *T'ŭm [The Empty Space]*. Seoul: Sol, 1995.
- Kim, Eun-Hey. "The Kingdom of God and Symbol: Feminist God-Talk in Cultural Analysis," *Korea Journal of Christian Studies* 44(2006/4), 287-314.
- Kim, Kyöng-jae. "Choi Sunn's view of the divine." *Tonghak Sasang kwa Tonghak Hyöngmyöng [Tonghak Thought and Tonghak Revolution]*. Seoul: Chöng-a Publishers, 1989.

- King, Ynestra. "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and the Nature/Culture Dualism." Eds. Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo. *Gender/ Body/ Knowledge/ Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- Lee, Jung-bae. *Hankukchŏk Saengmyŏng Sinhak* [A Korean Theology of Life]. Seoul: Kamsin Publisher, 1996.
- Lovelock, James. *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Margulis, Lynn and Dorian Sagan. *Microcosmos: Four Billions Years of Evolution from Our Microbian Ancestors*. New York: Summit Books, 1987.
- McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Midgley, Mary. *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978.
- Noh, Tae-gu, ed. *Tonghak Hyŏngmyŏng ui Yŏngu* [Study on Tonghak Revolution]. Seoul: Paeksan Sŏdang, 1982.
- O, Mun-hwan. *Sarami Hanŭlida* [Humanity is Heaven]. Seoul: Sol, 1996.
- Ortner, Sherry. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" Eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere. *Women, Culture and Society*. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1974.
- Paek, Se-Myŏng. *Ch'ŏndogyo ŭi Uchukwan, Insaengkwan, Chongkyokwan* [The Cosmology, Anthropology and Religion of Ch'ŏndogyo].
- Plant, Judith ed. *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*. Philadelphia: New Society, 1989.
- Plaskow, Judith. *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich*. New York: University Press of America, 1980.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization and World Religions*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Women and New Earth: Sexist Ideologies & Human Liberation*. San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1975.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1983 & 1993, Reprinted.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ecofeminism: Symbolic and Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature." Ed. Carol J. Adams. *Ecofeminism and the Sacred*. New York: Continuum, 1993.
- Saiving, Valerie. "The Human Situation: A Feminist View." Eds. Carol P. Christ & Judith Plaskow. *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. New York: HaperCollins Publishers, 1992.
- Schnaiberg, Allan and Kenneth Alan Gould. *Environment and Society: The Enduring Conflict*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1989.



- Spring, David and Eileen. *Ecology and Religion in History*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Suchocki, Marjorie Hewitt. *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *God-Christ-Church: A Practical Guide to Process Theology*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992.
- Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality* (Corrected Edition). Eds. David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne. New York: the Free Press, 1978.
- Yun, Sök-san, annot. *Tonggyŏng Daejŏn [The Great Scripture of East]*. Seoul: Tonghak-sa, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Yongdamyusa [The Remaining Words of Yongdam]*. Seoul: Tonghak-sa, 1999.

## Abstract

To counter the contemporary ecological crisis, this paper derives an ecological spirituality of ecojustice from ecofeminism and the Tonghak (the Korean indigenous religious and philosophical) tradition. By critically integrating Sherry Ortner's anthropological insights and Rosemary Ruether's ecofeminist insights, this paper first examines the cultural women-nature connection, then finds root causes in the twin oppressions of women and nature, and then concludes that the distorted human relationality of sexism is a form of original sin. Seeking to heal these patriarchal dualisms, this paper develops a Tonghak spirituality of ecofeminist relationality through its metaphysical implications stressing the radical unity (*Naeyu Silryŏng*) and the diversity (*Oeyu Kihwa*) of all things in the web of life. The Tonghak *Si Ch'ŏnju* vision of community as ecofeminist ecojustice reveals its ethical implications stressing the normative principle of ecological community by which we must abide (*Kagji Puli*). It finally envisions a Tonghak ecofeminist spirituality of ecojustice through the eschatological vision or goal of *Huch'ŏn Kaebyŏk*. Tonghak and ecofeminism both hold in common world views that are ecological, relational, evolutionary and embodied. They differ in that ecofeminism is gender-specific and historical while Tonghak spirituality is gender-neutral and metaphysical. In this sense, I think Tonghak spirituality and ecofeminism could deepen and radicalize each other through cross-cultural mutual dialogue and embodiment.

Key Words: Tonghak, Ecofeminism, Ecological Spirituality, Ecojustice