



**JANG ILSOON'S SOCIO-RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND ITS  
RELEVANCE FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SOUTH KOREA**

BY

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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## ABSTRACT

Religious individuals and communities have been at the heart of civil society and played a crucial role in the social and historical sphere of twentieth-century Korea. In particular, the Catholic Church in Korea had been widely credited for its dedication to justice for the weak and to democracy. However, it is undeniable that the Catholic Church in South Korea has lost its social influence. Indeed, over the past decade there has been a significant drop in the number of Catholics and the Church, once a pillar of civil society, has continuously lost its social position. While there are various possible explanations for this circumstance, a satisfactory one can be found in its recent past history. During the 1970s and 1980s the Church was the symbol of social and political resistance, and there was a lay leader and activist, who played a significant background role. Admittedly, Jang Ilsoon (1924-1994) is a little-known figure and thinker within Christian communities in contemporary Korea, but his teachings are far more influential among non-believers than Catholics regardless of their faith and political stance. The rationale is that he has been known to be a social activist or thinker rather than a Catholic lay leader. This is the first study to identify him as a Catholic activist and religious thinker. It aims to make an original contribution to growing interest in him and his ideological contributions to modern Korean. To scrutinise his socio-religious thought and life, this study grapples with his biographical facts and ideas, focusing on his interaction with the Catholic Church in twentieth-century Korea. As an introduction to his religious thought, this study focuses its religious background to explain how his thinking is shaped by three distinct religious ideas: Donghak, Seon Buddhism and Catholic teachings, and examines the influence of these religious ideas to grasp his thought and to understand his socio-political action. This study also discusses the way in which his religious idea can contribute to the recent pastoral realities of the Church.

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## List of Abbreviations

BMP	<i>Bulletin of Muwidang People</i>
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (1991)
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> (2013)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (1965)
HWSB	<i>Haewol Sinsa Beopseol</i>
LE	<i>Laborem Exercens</i> (1981)
NHM	<i>Nonhakmun</i>
OA	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> (1971)
QA	<i>Quadragesimo Anno</i> (1931)
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i> (1979)
RMG	<i>Remembering Muwidang Gathering</i>
RN	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> (1891)
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> (1987)

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Catholic Church in the Korean context*

Since Catholicism first came to Korea in 1784, the Catholic Church had been a defiant and reformist religious minority by 1970s (Grayson 1989, 208). Since its inception, it was generally called *Seohak* (Western learning) or considered as heresy, and its adherents were mainly from the powerless sections of society. For instance, early Catholicism in Korea disagreed with Confucianism in relation to *Jesa* (ancestral rites), which was the moral and social basis of the state. Consequently, the Church was branded as an anti-establishment religion, and those who followed heretic *Seohak* became severely oppressed. Indeed, the authorities depicted Catholics who were interrogated as ‘ones who wanted a upheaval’ (Park I. 2011, 337). Thus, in Korea the beginning of the Church can be explained by its intention of revolting against the state or changing society radically. In this respect, the Catholic Church began with the laity since its inception and had adhered socio-politically to the appropriateness of social reform through sporadic persecution. This has been an important historical identity of the Catholic Church in Korea.

However, the social intention and attitude of the Church turned quickly as Korea was coerced to open a port in the mid-nineteenth century. As noted above, during the first half of the nineteenth century state oppression of Catholics reached its height. In fact, there can be found the official statistics, showing that it lost almost

half of the followers (Park C. 1996, 234). Due to the opening of the port in 1876 and the France-Korea treaty of 1886, the Church obtained the right of evangelical mission; in turn its influence was gradually extended in social and ecclesial terms. In addition, the missionaries, mostly from France, with extraterritorial rights could also increase their influence. Specifically, in rural communities the Church attained higher social status and the missionaries also benefited from a privilege. This led the empowered Church into a confrontation with the existing social order. As noted earlier, it was reformative and resistant under state oppression. Yet it chose adaptation rather than resistance later, for its influence strengthened in the late nineteenth century. Like this, the social characteristic of the Church became after-life oriented as it was protected by governmental power, in fact it was due to diplomatic or military pressure, and was confronted with the existing social order. In a way, this change is related to mission policy or theological intention of the churches in Western Europe. As an example, *la Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris*, which first sent missionaries to Korea, had both imperialist attitudes of the French government and the reactionary character of the Church (Hong S. 1987, 36-59). Therefore, missionaries produced tension at different levels because of ignorance and prejudice about Korean culture and people. They believed that the social inequality and class was granted by God, thus the Church has an unfavourable opinion with the underlying social ambition, not with the existing social order. This pastoral and theological overall tendency had become a dominant characteristic of the Church during the twentieth century.

However, there existed an exception. Indeed, it is important to reassess the *Sankt Ottilien* Benedictine order's missional ministries and its significance. The congregation came to Korea in 1909 when Japan's illegal annexation was at hand. This Benedictine order that was established in Germany in 1884 confronted French

missionaries with a struggle for independence in political terms, and provided a religious basis for education and social engagement to Catholics (Park I. 2011, 343-344). Its missional method was rather traditional but it sought to help the faithful in dioceses in terms of everyday culture and education. These missionaries built an abbey and a seminary in Deokwon (currently in North Korea), and continued to do their mission works, encompassing the northern part of Korean peninsula and north-western area of China, after the liberation of Korea. Moreover, in this process, about 40 nuns and monks were sacrificed by the communist regime of North Korea. Here it is worth noting that some prominent figures in the Korean Church such as Bishop Ji Haksoon and Archbishop Yoon Gonghee, who led the social involvement of the Church in opposition to the authoritarian regimes in the 1970s and 1980s, were from Deokwon seminary founded by the *Sankt Ottilien* Benedictine order.

Indeed, after Vatican II an attempt to restore such a historical identity of the Catholic Church was made in one of the poorest dioceses in a disadvantaged small country town. At that time, in many respects, the Korean Church took a solid position in a socio-historical scene, as befits the Church of the laity. It was the Wonju diocese that took the lead in such a change, which was established in 1965 to celebrate the Council. Its diocesan bishop was Ji Haksoon, who was young and educated within the Benedictine tradition, and its leader of lay apostolate was Jang Ilsoon.

Returning to the main point, for the Korean Church it is generally believed that the Church should stay out of social and political matters. Such a stance seems to be related to its historical trauma. Unlike the Protestant churches in Korea, the Catholic Church went through state oppression in the first phase of its history, which might have caused relatively social and structural deprivation to the Church, and led to an after-life oriented faith. In the first half of the twentieth century, this tendency

was strengthened in the course of colonisation and liberation. As an example, the Catholic Church pitted the Protestant Church against the religious initiative in the ‘liberation space.’<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the Catholic Church in Korea remained separated from the social realities of *minjung* (the common people) with theological indifference.

Concerning this, recent studies on social involvement of the Catholic Church in South Korea showed how to separate the history of the Korean Church in terms of the social role and the theological intention (Park I. 2011; Oh, S. 2015). The noticeable aspect of these arguments is that the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) is commonly considered as a significant event to define the social roles and characteristics of the Catholic Church in South Korea. When the Council was convoked by John XXIII in 1962, the perennial social conflicts between the authoritarian military junta and the dissidents escalated and at the same time a struggle for democracy intensified in Korean society. In the political vortex, the Church was forced to make an uneasy choice. It is thus generally acknowledged that its response in Korea was not different from those in Latin America and other parts of Asia (cf. Huntington 1991, 72-85). Nevertheless, in Korea its *aggiornamento* was a somewhat delayed reaction in socio-political terms. This introduction tries to briefly explore the way in which it interacted with Korean society after Vatican II and the characteristics of its social involvement to provide more context for this study.

If Rahner’s argument (1979) is plausible, the significance of Vatican II is that the Church began to recognise itself as a genuine ‘world-church’. The Council provided the possibility of interpreting the teachings of the universal church in a

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<sup>1</sup> It is generally considered that a transitional period between colonial subjugation to national division (Hwang K. 2010, 196).

culturally and politically diverse context of the local church (cf. Lennan 2005, 138ff). It also made an attempt to redefine the fundamental relationship between it and a secularised pluralistic society beyond a Eurocentric perception of society and insular ecclesiology and soteriology. As a result, in order to continue the work of Christ, the Church asked itself a question about its essence, and faced the validity and permanence of its existence in a changing society. In the light of the self-renunciation of Christ, the Church in the modern world could not go against the current of giving up a temporal power and spiritually exclusive authority. Therefore, according to Vatican II, the Church exists within, along with, and towards the modern world. Consequently, it is due to the spirit of Vatican II that Christian theology and praxis are essentially missional and pastoral in order to proclaim the liberation Christ brought about and the redemption revealed in him.

As regards the Catholic Church in 1960s South Korea, in a war-torn nation the Church was anti-communist in an ideological sense, and fatalistic and fundamental in a doctrinal sense. In fact, since the 1961 military coup the Korean society led by the nonreflexive industrialisation, the growth paradigm became quickly disintegrated, and the ethics and the value of community collapsed. Moreover, the Church drifted around the social, political and theological vortex, hence it could not read ‘the signs of the times’ that Vatican II pointed out. In every aspect, it remained as a typical example of a colonial church without theological and social reflection. In such a situation, the Church was given the task of reflecting a social role for itself and its implications. Although the Church involved itself in social movements, in particular the democracy movement, rather late and passively, it is noticeable that the change of self-perception and the relativisation of power and theology had been gradually processed (Kim N. 1995, 279; Oh S. 2015, 101).

After the Council ended in 1965 the winds of change did not blow promptly in the Korean Church but the change could be perceived in the air. In 1966 and 1967 pastoral documents were released by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (CBCK) to be adopted by Catholics. In this process, the spirit of the Council clearly came out in parochial churches. In 1965 the Diocese of Wonju was established to commemorate the Council and the Vatican appointed Bishop Ji Haksoon as the first diocesan bishop. Bishop Ji was taught at Deokwon seminary founded by the Benedictine Congregation of *Sankt Ottilien*, as explained earlier. For this reason, he understood the Benedictine mission through institutions and projects and it was embedded in his pastoral guidelines. In addition, he was inspired by the somewhat radical, at least from the viewpoint of the Church in Korea at the time, spirit of the Council, for he himself looked at what happened at Vatican II. Indeed, in the late 1960s Bishop Ji emphasised the active role and education of the laity in the diocese, and participated in an ecumenical movement. In the beginning of 1970s, Bishop Ji raised his voice in relation to economic issues, and led the social justice movement of the Church along with Cardinal Kim Soohwan of the Archdiocese of Seoul. In this regard, the Church gradually extended its role in the social scene, and redefined its pastoral role.

Entering the 1970s, the Church, under the banner of *Sahoebokeumhwa* (social evangelisation), came to the fore of social involvement and political resistance. At that time, the percentage of Catholics was merely 3.5 percent of the population, but the Church played a pivotal role in the democracy movement of the 1970s. In December 1975, the CBCK re-established the Justice and Peace Committee (JPC), declaring its official involvement in the democracy movement. The CBCK also decided that the JPC would conduct all the devotional services on the state of affairs.

However, in July 1974 the dictatorial regime remanded Bishop Ji Haksoon in custody accusing him of instigating anti-government protests, in turn it triggered the full-scale democracy movement of the Catholic Church. The Church's political resistance to dictatorship became organised and sustained as the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ, generally called *Sajedan* in Korean) was founded in September that year. This founding of *Sajedan* was the first solidary ecclesial response to the political oppression of the Church and ecclesial elites and 'a dramatic turning point' as Bishop Ji Haksoon (1975) stated. The basic principle of *Sajedan* is deeply embedded in the spirit of Vatican II and the redemptive work of Christ. For *Sajedan*, the basic interest of Christ is the kingdom of God; it presents our hope of liberation. The kingdom of God is not only for the sake of the human spirit but also to break down injustice in the world (Park I. 1988, 10-24; KDF 2009, 2:380-393) Of late, *Sajedan* has been considered as an icon of social involvement and resistance of the Church in Korea, despite the fact that it remains unofficial.

From a theological perspective, the Church since the 1970s has sought to justify its social involvement, specifically the democracy movement, in the light of the spirit of Vatican II. In fact, the Korean Church engaged in political resistance and social involvement in opposition to dictatorship prior to theological consideration. In this process, some theological reflections emerged, such as a theology of experience and a theology of event but the social role for the Church had already been declared at Vatican II. Since the Council the Church in Korea spent considerable time and theological effort because of a passive and superficial understanding of the teachings of Vatican II. Yet in 1974 the Church started to suffer political oppression and the spirit of Vatican II was newly revealed in the oppressed daily life. Indeed, the most

quoted document in protest during the 1970s was *Gaudium et Spes* (KDF 2009, 2:404-406).

In this regard, the social engagement of the Church in the 1970s, the important characteristics are twofold: internal solidarity as found in ecclesial elites such as *Sajedan* and the JPC, and external solidarity through ecumenical relations with the Protestant Church (KDF 2009, 2:413). The Catholic Church in Korea, in pastoral terms, remained more faithful to the principle of solidarity in comparison to local churches in the West and Latin America where Christian social movements were regarded as a belated and defensive counterpart to pre-existing secular social movement. The Church in Korea with one intention, nationwide organisation and the well-educated laity could serve as a cradle for the non-Catholic movement (Kang I. 2000, 225-226). For example, Bishop Ji first began a credit union in 1966 and conducted a co-op movement with the laity for the benefit of the faithful in the diocese.

Over the last decade, the image of the Catholic Church in the 1970s and 1980s, which was a pillar of society under dictatorship, has faded away. It seems that the Church has sought to return to the past before Vatican II. As the June Uprising brought the formal democratisation in 1987, the Church, who had once stood out against the authoritarian regime, reinforced the idea of separation of church and state. It also became far more conservative in a socio-political sense under Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger in the 1980s. As a consequence, there emerged the closer integration of the Church and government in terms of politics. The Church also became more class-conscious and indifferent to pastoral realities in an ecclesiastic way. As Pope Francis warned in the meeting with Korean bishops in 2015, the Catholic Church in Korea is conceived of as a church of mediocrity in society. A few

decades ago the Church reiterated lessons on the rights of farmers, workers and citizens, but it is likely to follow an already insipid theology of prosperity. Advocates state that the Church has extended its intention to the environmental or peace movement instead of having shifted it. Nonetheless, in a negative sense, the Church enjoys an exclusive and secure social position within the status quo in company with the Protestant Church. Of late, the Church's social positioning and pastoral negligence of the marginalised, in the light of Christ's self-revelation (*Selbstmitteilung*), have posed a question about its social role. After *Rerum Novarum*, the Church has sought to restate its conviction that Catholic social thought is identical with the essence of the gospel. In that regard, to say the least, the Church has failed to embody its teachings and to apply it to the context of Korean society. Despite this, it is essential to note that Catholic social thought has penetrated Korean society not through ecclesial elites but through the lay faithful and their local communities.

In 2015 Pope Francis reminded the Korean bishops on their ad limina visit that the Catholic Church in Korea was established by lay people. It is uncertain whether they realised the hidden meaning of Francis' remarks, but as his remarks imply, the Church's history can be closely linked to this study.

***The need for the study: Jang Ilsoon as a religious thinker***

Jang Ilsoon was born in Wonju, Korea in 1928, when the country was under Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945). From the age of three, he learnt Chinese calligraphy and converted to Catholicism in childhood. As Korea was liberated in 1945, he studied aesthetics at university and in the post-Korean War period, he established a school and was involved in the education movement in Wonju. In 1961,

during Park Chung Hee's military junta, which seized power in a coup, he was imprisoned, accused of being a communist dissident, and his all social activities were forbidden. However, from the mid-1960s he engaged in the Catholic lay and credit union movement with Bishop Ji Haksoon, the diocesan bishop of Wonju. In the 1970s, he also served as a hidden leader of the anti-dictatorship movement. Further, his thought became the philosophical basis of the largest consumer co-operative movement in the mid-1980s, *Hansalim*, with which he was inextricably involved until he passed away from cancer in 1994.<sup>2</sup>

As seen before, Jang Ilsoon played a subtle, hidden role as a lay leader when the Church actively engaged with social and political issues under Park's military dictatorship during the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, he played a vital role in the beginning of the lay apostolate according to Vatican II. He also led the so-called Wonju group, which was one of the prominent local activist groups during the 1970s and 1980s, and thus his idea and action became the bedrock of the consumer co-operative movement in Korea without his intention. Indeed, this point has aroused renewed interest in Korean society of late, but unfortunately, the Church has shown no interest in his idea and activity. In a way, the reason behind the growing interest in Jang Ilsoon can thus be explained in terms of civil society, particularly the consumer co-operative movement in Korea. From the April Revolution in 1960, civil society emerged and developed by people strenuously resisting the authoritarian and bureaucratic political power, but the distinctive quality of civil society began to change after mass democratisation protests in 1987. As the state's political and economic hegemony have gradually declined, the roles of existing dissident groups

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<sup>2</sup> This study follows the Revised Romanisation of the Korean language (2000) with the exceptions of some famous names.

and alternatives to dissident groups were publicly discussed (Choi J. 2010, 220-243). This discussion has been welcomed since the financial crisis in 1998, for neoliberalist values and individualistic culture had been on the rise in the late 1990s. Civil society has also been required to transform its roles and formation due to the socio-political transformation; hence the consumer co-operative movement was highly publicised as an alternative. Indeed, it has been recognised as a new axis of civil society in twenty-first century Korea and has taken on a new social significance in the process of applying the principle of participation and solidarity within the social domain.<sup>3</sup> In the 2000s, it appeared that such a need for change in civil society aroused interest in the life and thinking of Jang Ilsoon. In particular, *Hansalim* began to shed new light on his role in its history. For this reason, most research into Jang Ilsoon has magnified his part and influence in the history of the consumer co-operative movement, though recently, a number of studies thus far have tried to link his thought with Eastern or indigenous religions, such as *Donghak*, Buddhism, Daoism.<sup>4</sup>

Most importantly, Jang Ilsoon lived as a devout Catholic and a lay leader, who was able to reconcile Korean society and the Church. His thought is thought to originate from modern Catholic social teachings, but in the later years, his reflections on *Donghak* and *Seon* broaden his socio-religious thought. This unique, ideological feature can be universally accepted to non-believers, and at the same time no particular religious idea can embrace his thought in turn. Especially, for the Catholic Church he is not thought to have been a lay thinker; thus there have been no thorough or theological researches on him within the Church. Despite this, the implications of

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<sup>3</sup> In December 2012, Framework Act on Co-operatives was introduced in Korea, thus more than five people can set up a co-operative.

<sup>4</sup> *Donghak* (Eastern Learning), which was founded by Choi Jeu in 1860, was Korea's first indigenous organised religion.

his idea and action could be for the Church's pastoral ministry and have shown that its aim is to redeem the world. This study thus grapples with his socio-religious thought from various religious perspectives, by focusing his religious identity as a Catholic, in order to confront the recent challenges of the Church's pastoral ministry, which has drifted carelessly in a contemporary society.

### ***Related Literature***

After Jang passed away in 1994, his disciples were not involved in any public activities under his name except for private meetings. However, on the seventh anniversary of this death, in 2001 his disciples decided to bring out a bulletin (currently *Bulletin of Muwidang People*) in order to collect and keep personal and historical records relating to him. It is worth noting that in the first issue they labelled his thought as having an 'interfaith' feature (BMP 1). This implies that the religious aspects of his thought need to be primarily considered. In addition to the BMP collection, academic research on him has been carried out in recent years. In 2014, Kim Sonam of the National Institute of Korean History conducted historical research on the development of the co-operative movement in Wonju during the 1960s and 1980s. Kim pointed out that there were distinctive philosophical foundations for the co-op movement in Wonju, which was led by Jang Ilsoon and Bishop Ji Haksoon. However, in his analysis there is no obvious explanation for how Jang's thought is related to the philosophical basis of the co-op movement. Gang Changseon (2015) dealt with Jang's philosophy of life and life movement from the perspective of alternative politics. He argues that Jang's philosophy of life is possibly related with social ecology, and compares it to Western environmentalism. His study is in line

with recent social demand for ecological awareness.<sup>5</sup> Yet, according to Jang Ilsoon's son (2014), Jang preferred the movement of life to the environmental movement because the latter appeared to be a humanocentric. Despite this view, a Catholic priest, Jeong Honggyu's (2014) work on the Korean Catholic Church's ecological movement identifies Jang Ilsoon as an ecological thinker based on Catholic figures like Teilhard de Chardin or Thomas Berry; and traces Jang's philosophical basis back to Haewol's teachings.<sup>6</sup> As explained earlier, Jang Ilsoon observed that an undesirable consequence of growth-oriented development during the 1960s and 1970s was a change of traditional Korean attitudes to *jayeon* (nature). Traditionally, Korean culture had a nature-friendly attitude towards the natural environment in the Korean peninsula, which features plenty of rivers and mountains; thus their traditional wisdom was coexisting with nature. This traditional ecological knowledge also emphasises harmony with *jayeon* in the belief that humans and all living beings are identical in essence (Park H. 2002, 23). However, the growth-oriented development, which caused rapid urbanisation and regional income inequality, brought about radical ethical change in rural communities. *Jayeon* was privatised and relativised in a fundamental sense. The holistic approach to *jayeon* was displaced by the view that it was a means of economic development. It was also considered as a resource for the sake of economic growth. Korean indigenous attitudes to humans and *jayeon* was also replaced by an insatiable desire for economic growth during the age of excessive development in the 1960s and 1970s. As regards this, Yun Nobin (2003), a Hegelian philosopher and a disciple of Jang Ilsoon, posed philosophical reflections on the ecologically ignorant and disintegrating Korean society. In his work, he shed light on

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<sup>5</sup> Recently, the four rivers restoration project (2008-2012) and Jeju naval base construction (2007-2016) led to extreme social conflict over ecological validity.

<sup>6</sup> Haewol is a honorary name of Choi Sihyeong, who was the second leader of *Donghak*.

the negative impacts of the modern Western worldview and its application in Korea, and suggested a change of social direction in an apocalyptic and philosophical manner. In fact, he did not discuss ecological and environmental issues in his book. However, the crucial importance is that current ecological thought and its practical values stem from his discussion of modern Korea (Yun H. 2003, 97-98).

In another major study on Korean philosophers, Jeon Hogeun (2015) argues that Jang is one of three important Korean philosophers of the twentieth century. His work could be the first attempt to extend the existing scope of study, which has described Jang as a mere activist of the co-op movement, and to systematise his ideas. However, in taking a philosophical view on Jang's philosophy, he conclusively claims that it is closely connected with Eastern religions. In his recent study, Jeon (2016) still demonstrates that Jang's idea of peace is a modern interpretation of Korean Buddhism. In the same vein, Park Maengsoo (2014), a *Donghak* scholar, discussed an ideological correlation between Jang's thought and Haewol's. Like this, much of the available literature on Jang Ilsoon has neglected his relevance to the Catholic Church although he was a 'faithful' Catholic communicant throughout his life (Jang H. 2014). Here a question arises why the interaction between Jang Ilsoon and the Catholic Church has been ignored in academic circles. Moreover, a recent study disapproved of the significance of Catholicism in his life and thought. In some ways, such an argument has relied on Ri Yeonghui's statement, who was a close friend of Jang Ilsoon and a prominent thinker.<sup>7</sup> Despite this, it is not an exaggeration to say that Jang Ilsoon's life and thought was based on his Catholic faith and the Catholic tradition.

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<sup>7</sup> 'I am superficial and only look at one aspect of the things, so that I am not broad-minded. But he [Jang Ilsoon] harmonised multifaceted, multi-layered, complex and different looking ideas like a big furnace [...] His way of living seemed both Daoist and Buddhist, rather 'not Christian.' He was not bound by Catholic principles or category.' (Ri Y. 2006, 135)

This study thus intends to examine the way in which his social thought was shaped by distinct religious ideas through the interaction with his social surroundings in twentieth-century Korea; and to unravel the Catholic Church's influences on him. In addition, as his son remembered, Jang Ilsoon was known to take an intense interest in *Seon* (Zen in Korean) and *Donghak* (Jang D. 2014). In this regard, in order to understand his last years, in which he appeared to distance himself from the Church in a doctrinal sense, this study is also concerned with some aspects of *Donghak* and *Seon* relating to his thought and life.

### ***Structure***

The overall structure of the study takes the form of six chapters. The first deals with Jang Ilsoon's life and its historical background, which provide the foundations for understanding his thinking; suggesting that his strong sense of personal identity as an educator and social activist appears to be shaped by the interplay between his life events and historical context to an extent. The second chapter examines Catholic social thought as a starting point to scrutinise the background of Jang's thought, focusing on *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* has been conceived of as the Church's first response to social issues, and its ecclesial impact has been significant in the twentieth century. *Gaudium et Spes* was the last conciliar document in Vatican II and the most important reference to the guiding principles of Catholic social thought today. The two subsequent chapters grapple with the way in which his thinking in his later years was shaped and developed in the light of two religious ideas: *Seon* and *Donghak*. Jang's ideological shift in his last years is believed to be profoundly influenced by *Donghak*

philosophy, especially its second leader Haewol's radical and resistant teachings. On the other hand, the importance of *Seon* has been neglected in relation to the development of Jang's thinking. The fourth chapter thus attempts to throw new light on how he internalised the social implications of *Seon*. The fifth chapter examines how his thought had changed in the socio-political context of modern Korea, tying up the various historical and theoretical strands discussed in the previous chapters. The final chapter draws upon the entire thesis and examines the significance of Jang's social thought and its possible contributions to the Catholic Church in Korea, suggesting that his thought can be employed in the pastoral realities of the Church, notwithstanding its religious ambiguity and radicalness.

### ***Methodology***

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on historical analysis of the written material, supplemented by interviews and critically analysed from the religious perspective. In the light of critical analysis, this study discusses how his thought may contribute to the Catholic Church in Korea. The study mainly uses documentary analysis in order to lay out the historical and theoretical background of Jang Ilsoon's life and thinking. However, there is still insufficient primary sources because he left very few written work to protect the people close to him (Hwang D. 2014; Kim Y. 2014). Indeed, he did not author any work himself for publication during his lifetime, although, since the late 1990s, some books have been published under his name from his lectures and interviews, which were collected by his disciples. In 1997, Lee Hyeonjoo, a close follower and Methodist minister, put out a book from their unfinished conversation at Jang's bedside about the Laozi. In 1998, the best-known book about him, the Universe in a

Grain of Rice, was published, which was a collection of lectures and talks of Jang's last years. Since then, a handful of similar books about anecdotes and events about him were published (Choi S. 2004; Kim I. 2010). Particularly, in 2004 Remembering Muwidang Gathering collected and published the accounts of the well-known people who knew Jang and their recollection (RMG 2004). This book shows that there are diverse views on him in terms of his background and position. As for secondary sources, historical records relating to him were collected using an unauthorised biography of Jang Ilsoon written by Lee Yongpo in 2011, the history of Hansalim, published on its twentieth anniversary in 2006 by the Centre for the Web of Life, and 58 issues of the quarterly BMP. Some of written material have been translated into English and quoted throughout this thesis.

Due to the conspicuous lack of primary and secondary source materials, in 2014 I drew on two months of field research in Cambridge, where his youngest son was a visiting scholar, and in his hometown Wonju, where I interviewed his family members and disciples. I chose three from his family and four from people nearest to him, who had worked with him from the 1950s, in order to develop a proper biographical representation. Hwang Dogeun, Jang's nephew-in-law and physicist, has organised Muwidang School, a series of lecture on Jang for ordinary citizens, from 2012 and testified Jang's thinking and activities in his last years. Jang Hwasoon, Jang's younger brother, recalled what happened to his family since the liberation in 1945, especially what his brother did in the 1950s, and remembered his brother rather differently from his disciples. Jang Dongcheon, Jang's youngest son and scholar on modern Chinese literature, rectified existing biographical errors and preconceived opinions about his father. Especially, a strong hint of Jang Ilsoon's change at private level was given in his interview. Lee Gyeonguk and Kim Youngju are Jang's closest

disciples. They had both worked with Jang for over 40 years and have sought to propagate his ideas in the public sphere. They testified how Jang Ilsoon served as a leader of the laity and social activist within the Catholic Church. Then, Jeong Injae of Wonju Catholic Centre talked about Jang's relationship with Bishop Ji Haksoon from an outsider's view. Lastly, Kim Yongu, once a student activist, was known to give up the leftist student activism after he met Jang Ilsoon in the late 1980s. He has engaged in the community movement and the alternative education, which is based on Jang's thought. He showed how Jang's ideas could be applied in the local context from his experience. Through these in-depth interviews, I have sought to narrow a biographical gap in existing information, which has previously been presented as too abstract and partial, and rectify conventional understanding of his life events and thinking.

In conducting interviews, I focused on their 'voices' in terms of the diverse backgrounds of each of them apart from basic and common questions about Jang Ilsoon, thus I as an interviewer sought to exclude a preconceived hypothesis about his life and thought, according to the rules of listening and responding as dialogical practice suggests. A transcript of the interview are translated into English and placed in the appendix except for what the interviewees requested to be off the record.

## Chapter 1

### **The Background: Jang Ilsoon's Life and Socio-Historical Context**

As Charles Wright Mills argues, both the life of an individual and the history of a society need to be understood by understanding their interplay (Mills 2000 [1959], 3f). In this sense, it is essential that Jang Ilsoon's biographical information and modern Korean history are equally explored so as to elaborate his thought. Jang Ilsoon has hardly been able to distance himself from the ambivalent history of contemporary Korea. In most respects, recomposing and reinterpreting fragments of his life in its primary historical context would be meaningful. He was born in 1928 under the Japanese colonial rule and lived through the political turbulence during the second half of the twentieth century. Again, with respect to the development of Jang's thought, it can be said that there is the inextricable connection between the historical context, such as the colonial experience in the post-liberation period, and Park Chung Hee's developmental dictatorship after the 1961 military coup led by him in the 1960s and 1970s, and his personal life.<sup>8</sup> His life shows the extent to which the political and social issues can exert an influence over an individual. While it is not easy to find direct historical linkages with his thinking, it can be argued that his personal experience is provided as a foundation of his thinking. In the pages that follow, the

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<sup>8</sup> Throughout this study, the term developmental dictatorship in modern Korea is equated with excessive or growth-oriented industrialisation led by a highly authoritarian bureaucratic regime, manipulating the powerless with illusory socio-economic equality.

socio-historical context of his thought and activity will be explored, beginning by sketching out the history of modern Korea, relating to his personal life, in order to grasp the key factors that shaped Jang Ilsoon's thinking.

### 1.1. The Legacy of Japanese colonial rule

During the second half of twentieth century, there emerged many efforts to shed light on the colonial legacy from Japanese rule. To date, the way in which the colonial experience and its relations to modern Korea are interpreted in the process of state-building, in the historiography of Korea, has been highly controversial and much disputed. The controversy about the issue also involves redefining modernity in colonial Korea and investigating its change during the dictatorial regime during the 1960s and 1970s. Although the thirty-six-year colonial history is relatively shorter than the Taiwanese and the Filipino one, the legacy from the colonial period has immensely influenced various aspects of Korean society, for the most part detrimentally.

As a study on the Taiwanese experience in colonial Taiwan shows, 'the Koreans speak oppression and resistance, the Taiwanese speak of modernization and development,' the colonial experience of the Koreans is distinct from other colonies (Ching 2001, 8). For the Koreans, it could be true that national or individual identity was affected multidimensionally by their colonial experience (Choi J. 2013, 18). There exist a distorted and internalised identity, and painful memories in modern Korean history. Indeed, the colonial legacy can be found collectively and

fragmentarily in Korea, but it cannot be a simple conception. Thus, in order to understand how colonial experience is linked to individual thoughts, it is necessary to simplify the colonial legacy down to the personal level and to link it to individual experience. Because the colonial legacy, which is embedded in society, can emerge beyond a social dimension through an individual decision and activity, there is the possibility of reframing the concept by historical interpretation. When Japan annexed Korea in 1910, the Japanese imperialists justified their colonial rule on the grounds of a need to modernise Korea (Lee M. 2011, 86ff).

Modernisation is generally accompanied by industrialisation and democratisation in a Western sense. However, in the late nineteenth century, Meiji Japan, which was marked by modernisation, focused solely on external factors without social and political modernity. Japan began modernising the country with a value-oriented perception and a favourable attitude towards imperialistic culture. In this regard, although Japan's modernisation was conceptually different from the West's, the country's modernisation ironically aimed to be westernised in an imperialistic way (Watson 2007, 172-173). Consequently, in colonial Korea, Japan, which was inclined to statism and social evolutionism, infused them into the colonial society and established a new colonised identity. Rather than modernisation of the economic and educational sectors as its propaganda, cultural discrimination and totalitarian violence were perpetrated in colonial Korea. Japan justified its colonisation and perceived itself as the civilised leader and the centre of modernisation in East Asia with the dichotomous epistemology of civilised West and uncivilised Asia. Its rhetoric of colonial modernisation was based on deep-rooted prejudice against the Koreans.

In 1921, the Japanese Government General of Korea published Toru Takahashi's study on the Korean, as a theoretical foundation of colonial policy. According to Takahashi, there are ten national characteristics of Koreans, and some negatives, such as formalism, factionalism, literary indulgence, lack of aesthetics, and confusion of public and private matters were to be corrected by colonisation; in consequence, the ultimate aim of colonisation was to assimilate Koreans into Japanese culture, which was thought to have been modernised earlier (Takahashi 1921, 143-149). In practice, Japanese imperialism sought to obliterate Korean identity, having an imperialistic perception of Korea to be modernised and Japanese (Kwon T. 2005, 164), with the premise that Japan and Korea were in the same cultural sphere, the assimilation policy was implemented. In this sense, Beasley describes Japanese imperialistic approach towards its neighbouring countries:

[...] there was fashioned an approach to Japan's relations with the outside world which emphasized Japanese values, not Western ones. What is more, Japanese values were increasingly seen to be Asian values. It followed that on the purpose of establishing Japanese power in East Asia was to defend Asia's soul, not merely its territory [...] there was a single Asian culture, composed of different regional ingredients of which Japan had over the centuries become the chief repository. The qualities that had made it possible to synthesize these various components into a harmonious whole had also saved Japanese society from being overwhelmed by Western influence [...] in order to save Asia, Japan must reaffirm a commitment to its own inherited ideals. Only in this way would it be possible to restore 'the old Asiatic unity' and give Asia the self-reliance to assert itself against the West. (Beasley 1987, 32-33)

However, such an idea behind the policy gave rise to massive opposition and resistance in colonial Korea. Koreans traditionally had felt cultural superiority over Japan as a bearer of continental culture and thought for centuries, and there also existed ethnic identity as a unified nation for over a thousand years. In addition, Koreans generally considered many features of Japanese culture and society to be inferior in the first phase of the colonial rule. Despite this, Japan could easily obtain a

tacit agreement and support from Korean intellectual innovators whose autonomous modernisation had failed in the late nineteenth century and who aspired to modernisation in Japanese ways. Accordingly, Japanese imperialism could colonise Korea as a 'laboratory of modernity' (Stoler 1995, 15).

Here it must also be considered that Japan's modernisation scheme in colonial Korea was a blatant attempt to hide imperialistic territorial expansion and a pre-modern social order was forced on the colony. Since it is clear from the above that many aspects of civil society were limited in Japanese modernisation, various political and social values of modernisation were excluded in colonial Korea. As a consequence, such mechanisms to oppress and threaten civil and social rights were immanent in modern Korean history until the late 1980s. Regardless of some contentious issues in colonial Korea, Japan's plan for modernisation of Confucianised Korea was considered to have succeeded due to the fact that modernisation through education seems to have been successful and completed owing to successful exclusion of religious values and encouragement of rational thought. But modern education that Japan applied to Korea was considered as an ostentatious means of colonial policy. For instance, high priority was given to Japanese language education in the early stage of the colonial rule. Although Japan highlighted modernisation through education in the colony, it seems not to have happened in practice. Indeed, regardless of Koreans' passion for education, the colonial government did not provide fair educational opportunities. For example, primary education was compulsory in Japan, but not in colonial Korea. Besides, Koreans could hardly find opportunities in secondary and higher education. Statistics show that the number of high school students and college students per thousand were forty and two respectively in colonial Korea (Oh S. 1998, 231-232). For this reason, Korean nationalists, who were eager to

liberate the country and to modernise autonomously, started to establish private schools at which nationalist education began as a nationwide campaign. They assured that people should become conscious of national identity through education (Choi J. 2013, 158). Such an idea of nationalism stemmed from the colonial experience in modern Korean history.

Jang Ilsoon was born in 1928 under Japanese colonial rule. Since his childhood, he had learnt calligraphy from his grandfather, which later helped him to control his mind after he was released from prison in the early 1960s (Jang I. 2009, 160). Moreover, as he remembered, his grandfather influenced his attitude towards people in many senses by demonstrating how to treat neighbours and teachings him moral duties and civic responsibilities. In 1940, his family converted to Catholicism

In 1945, Korea was liberated from Japanese colonial rule but Koreans did not gain complete independence. The northern part of the peninsula was occupied by the Soviet Union and the southern part was ruled by the United States' military government (USAMGIK). Jang Ilsoon was displeased with the division and criticised both the left wing and the right wing; he was expelled from university for taking part in a protest against the USAMGIK's education policy of merging universities. In 1946, he was persuaded to return to university and studied aesthetics at Seoul National University.

As the Korean War ended in 1953, which raged for three years, Jang Ilsoon returned to Wonju, his hometown.<sup>9</sup> He found that decent education was necessary for the people. He also believed that education was highly important and his vocation in the post-war Korea (Kim Y. 2014). In 1953, he took over a public school, which was

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<sup>9</sup> More precisely, the Korean War has not ended officially; the United Nations Command signed an armistice with North Korea in July 1953. A new border between South Korea and North Korea was established as a result of the truce, which has kept them separated to date.

on the verge of insolvency, and founded a new high school in his hometown the following year (Lee Y. 2011, 63-65). He served as a chairman for five years. The school was named after Daeseong School founded by An Changho in 1908, a patriot and Christian nationalist, with a passionate belief in education who put tremendous effort into restoration of the country from colonial rule. He was inclined to gradual changes rather than radical ones. Hence, he founded Daeseong School in Pyongyang on the brink of Japanese annexation. He had a strong conviction that the power of the nation was the key to liberation (Jeong G. 2015, 75ff; Jo G. 2015, 60ff). From the colonial experience, Jang could concur with An Changho's strong belief in national prosperity and power through education at Paichai School except for An's identification with nation and state. Indeed, An believed that the nation was closely identified with the state, and that the existential value of an individual needed to be realised at the level of the nation. It was his belief that education was the best way to develop one's character and to foster solidarity in order to establish national identity.

Jang Ilsoon received his education at Paichai School in Seoul (Choi S. 2004, 23), which was founded in 1885 by a Methodist missionary, Henry Appenzeller; its aim was to educate Christian intellectuals through Western liberal education. However, when Jang went to Paichai, nationalist education was of great importance like other nationalist private schools under Japanese occupation. It can thus be inferred that Jang acquired much of both Western knowledge and nationalist thought, and began to realise its importance for the country. This background explains why he intended to establish a school in his hometown after the Korean War and why he named it after a nationalist one. Also, it shows why his friends and disciples identify him as a passionate educator.

Another relevant point is a correlation between Jang's educational fervour and nationalism, which emerged from the experience of the colonial rule. Jang's nationalist view on education could be traced back to the motto of Wonju Daeseong School that he founded. Its motto was 'Be sincere.' Jang considered it important to teach students to live together and to treat people respectfully. For him the essence of education is to teach how to live as human beings in company and to share this principle in a mutual relationship (Lee Y. 2011, 65-67). Jang's thought appears to be related to nationalist education in colonial Korea, in some senses. Under Japanese colonial rule, the nationalists founded more than thousand private schools, which naturally aimed to bring independence to the country. In other words, nationalist education had a clear purpose of overcoming national crisis, supporting the independence movement and increasing national capability (Kim S. 2008, 55). However, these schools placed educational emphasis not only on developing national identity but also on forming each student's character. For instance, Pyongyang Daeseong School, at which honesty was emphasised as a great virtue through education. Jang's educational focus was to form good character through education, sharing the legacy of nationalist education.

Here some questions are posed, which have never been dealt with, whether he was a nationalist and whether the colonial experience had made him one. Nationalism is an elusive concept. According to Anthony Smith, it can be defined as an ideology of which the main concern is the nation and its common purpose is to accomplish and to preserve 'national autonomy, national unity and national identity' for establishing an existent or future nation (Smith 2010, 9). Equally important, nationalism tends to have a complex feature that could form a new and specific concept by adopting other ideologies. In twentieth-century Korea, nationalism conveys a rather different

meaning. Contrary to the general notion of nationalism, the concept was understood as the opposite of imperialism. Korean nationalists shared ideological diversity and had a dream of independence in common under Japanese occupation. Further, they emphasised not only political independence but also cultural uniqueness. They viewed the nation as the agent of decolonisation, affirming education to realise the potential of the nation. Therefore, Korean nationalists created expectations of liberation through education as a solution to the problem of the nation in colonial Korea.

However, in some senses, this explanation seems insufficient proof that Jang was enthusiastic about nationalism. Rather my inclination is that he was a pragmatist who engaged in educational work to overcome his country's historical trauma related to the colonial experience. No biographical facts suggest that he was an ideologically-oriented person, although there could be found some aspects of nationalism through his passionate belief in education and its worth. Jang did not believe the idea that a certain ideology would be a solution for problems that his country faced, that is, he believed that education that was free from ideologies was possible. That is what he learnt from his historical experience through times of conflict of ideologies.

## 1.2. The Shadow of Developmental Dictatorship, 1961-1979

Park Chung Hee seized power in a military coup d'état in May 1961 and ruled South Korea for eighteen years until his assassination in 1979 (Jo H. 2007, 22-32; Jeong H. 2011, 24-30). As regards the history of modern Korea, it is an important matter how to assess the Park Chung Hee era. Especially, as his daughter won the last

presidential election in 2012, the political situation of Korean society has heightened the need for reassessing the Park era. Hence, the issue has recently become a source of social and political contention and the highly controversial discourse is causing an ideological polarisation of Korean society.

In recent years, there has been much discussion about Park Chung Hee's developmental dictatorship and its economic dimension such as a correlation between his drive for growth-oriented development and the post-Park society, and Korea's hypergrowth and its developmental origins. However, a major problem with this kind of approach is that many aspects of excessive industrialisation were ignored (Lee B. 2003, 19-21). In illuminating the concept of developmental dictatorship, neglected aspects of developmentalism must be critically considered. In some ways, regarding the Park era, the existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between industrialisation and democracy. From an economic perspective, Korea's extraordinary growth can be considered to be an economic miracle of one of the world's poorest countries having been ravaged by the Korean War. But the main disadvantage of this view is that any mythical angle can reinforce a tendency to neglect a negative legacy of developmentalism and negative path dependence in Korean society. As Paul Krugman (1994) showed in his study on the phenomenal economic growth in East Asian countries, the growth syndrome does not guarantee an optimistic scenario in the long term. Hence, I critically examine the main destructive aspects of Park's developmentalism later in this section, which inevitably exerted an influence on the way Jang reacted against them.

It is a widely held view that the history of modern Korea is filled with memories of resistance. From the same viewpoint, the Park regime is generally understood as a developmental dictatorship and oppressive authoritarianism (Jeong I.

2011, 71-74). Here it is necessary to identify what has been meant by developmental dictatorship up until the recent intellectual fight for ideological hegemony in Korean society. Briefly, the term encompasses a) developmental ruling block of oppressive political authority, b) a social ruling group limiting political freedom and public participation, c) statist ideology of public mobilisation, d) integration, giving more weight to economic growth rather than procedural justice, and e) growth-oriented cooperation among the state, market and system, aiming for a self-supporting economy (Lee B. 2003, 25). However, this concept has recently been challenged by those opposed to defining the Park regime as a developmental dictatorship. It has been generally thought that the Park period refers to a system of binomial opposition, such as fascism and democracy, development and exploitation, and so forth. But recent contentious studies conclude that the military coup and authoritarian regime were inevitable for socio-politically predatory Korea's modernisation, as were the Japanese colonial rule and hypergrowth in the 1960s and 1970s, suggesting that Park was a leader of great transformation (Kim and Vogel 2011; Kim and Sorensen 2011; Kohl 1994). These studies have also demonstrated the aspect of public mobilisation and public support for the regime from below, suggesting a new theory of public dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s in Korea (Lim J. 2000; Hwang B. 2000). Despite this, developmental dictatorship is a key concept to understand the Park era. First, it can provide a socially and politically integrated approach to the modern history of Korea. In the case of the Park era, it helps to maintain a conceptual and analytical balance between industrialisation theory, destitute of political analysis and political analysis without understanding the economic development process. Second, it can provide critical viewpoints on the dilemma of developmental dictatorship. At the very

beginning, the motto of the regime was ‘the modernisation of the homeland,’ mainly industrialisation, due to a lack of the Park regime’s legitimacy (Jo H. 2007, 39-45).

In terms of the history of ideology in Korea, diverse ideological potentialities within the postcolonial realm in the mid-1940s were replaced with anticommunism and cold war ideology through the experience of the Korean War (1950-1953).

Korean society thus entered a period of rejection of left-wing and socialist values in the postwar period (Cumings 2010, 208ff). In addition, Park’s military coup in 1961 utilised and reinforced this ideological bias for the purpose of development, hence there inevitably coexisted an oppressive social order and an excessive industrialisation drive in an interdependent way. For Jang Ilsoon, the 1961 military coup d’état must have been a torment. Not long after the military coup, Jang was arrested on charges of agreeing with neutralised reunification theory, opposing the governmental stance on the issue, and was incarcerated for three years in prison (Kim Y. 2014). After his release from prison in 1963, he was prohibited from political activity by the junta. According to his wife: ‘He[Jang] quite often said that living fish should swim up rivers. But he realised the meaning of life carried by the current after serving the sentence’ (Choi S. 2004, 28). Nonetheless, for Jang, the Park period and its legacy had to be overcome at both a social and personal level.

From the 1960s, Jang’s difficult relationship with the military regime began. Just after he was released from prison, he was removed as chairman of the school by the regime because his students had participated in a protest against the contentious treaty between South Korea and Japan in 1965. As one of his disciples noted, Jang identified himself as an educator for his years; hence he tried to go into politics for education that was free from government control (Kim Y. 2014). But it left him nothing but deep disappointment and political repression. Despite this, he always

regretted that he was ousted from the school that he had founded and was unable to continue with the education movement (Jang I. 2009, 167). From the mid-1960s, he was forbidden from being involved in political activity by the authoritarian regime, thus he began to write calligraphy again and grow grapes. As his son remembered, Jang Ilsoon considered himself as a mere farmer from then on (Jang D. 2014). He stated:

It [the military coup] is not a revolution. Revolution never comes when they browbeat people with guns. That is what gangsters do. Revolution is to embrace all. True revolution is to conceive something new as a hen broods. (Lee Y. 2011, 87)

As regards Korean developmentalism in historical terms, the general consensus is that it started with the need for the post-war reconstruction after the Korean War ended in 1953. In the postwar period, war exhaustion and its scars resulted in ideological rearmament in the social dimension and statist development as a system of economic competition between North and South Korea, which concentrated on the construction of infrastructure and natural resource exploitation. In 1955, the Ministry of Revival was established, which was responsible for the postwar reconstruction, such as land development and construction. The post-war reconstruction was a dominant trend in the Korean economy and continued after the 1961 coup. But Park's newly established Economic Planning Board was an economic control tower to plan a basis for his developmentalism. In this way, the Park regime made up a new ideology of developmentalism, which centred on quantitative growth and imbalanced industrialisation. There was the extraordinary growth, which rocked the foundations of the Korean economy, to some extent, during the Park era. For instance, Korea's GNP increased thirtyfold during the Park era (Hong S. 2007, 245). However, as a consequence of such development, the country remained socially and

politically unaware, despite the fact that Korea accomplished its economic mission to rapid industrialisation in a quantitative manner. Compressed development produced a growth-oriented society, thus the community and the environment as the shelter of humanity were demeaned as a means of economic development (Jo M. 2003, 37-40).

In a nutshell, it can be said that the core of Park's developmentalism was 'unsustainable development' as Paik Nakchung points out (2004).

A large number of Koreans consider economic growth as development, thus democratisation is subordinated to economic growth. In fact, this is materialism which can be found everywhere in the world. But it is also a social consequence of Park Chung Hee's modernisation. His growth-oriented modernisation diffused mammonism and led to form the destructive mentality considering anti-environmental development as inevitable. (Hong S. 2007, 313)

Arguably, Korean developmentalism led by the military regime achieved rapid growth due to patriotic sentiment after the postwar period as Koreans perceived development as economic growth. As the Park regime equated development with growth-oriented industrialisation, the regime turned a blind eye to the other side of the coin so when the junta launched an industrialisation drive from the 1960s, there emerged a high risk of industrial pollution. Because of this, the government made a pollution control law in 1963, which was four years earlier than industrialised Japan, but, in practice, it passively reacted to the issue. In modern Korea, growth-oriented industrialisation eventually caused environmental destruction such as air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution, even destruction of traditional values. However, very few studies, such as those by Yu Inho (1973), Lee Byeongcheon (2003) and Hong Seongtae (2007) are available on Park's developmentalism and its damaging impact on the environment. In his thorough study of the detrimental effects of developmentalism during 1960s and 1970s, Yu Inho, an economist, demonstrated that the rapid industrialisation resulted in the environmental destruction, in particular

industrial pollution (1973, 884-885). According to Yu (1973), fine particulate matter in three of the biggest industrial cities in Korea was twenty times as many as air quality standards in the US. Also, river and marine ecosystems faced destruction and many species of fishes and plants were threatened with extinction as a result of excessive industrialisation (Yu I. 1973, 884-893). However, no realistic or effective solution was provided by the government and business sectors as environmental pollution worsened in Korea during this period.

In 1965, the Second Vatican Council closed and to commemorate the Council, the Catholic Church established a new diocese in Wonju. To the Church, one of the significant contributions of Vatican II was to foster serious theological reflection on the ecclesial role of the laity and the social role of the Church. Ji Haksoon, the first bishop of Wonju Diocese, wanted to make the Catholic Church in Korea independent and to apply a theology of the laity to the Church in the light of Vatican II. Bishop Ji considered Jang Ilsoon, well-reputed in Wonju, as the most suitable person for assisting him in his pastoral work. Jang Ilsoon's encounter with Bishop Ji Haksoon, who was greatly inspired by the Second Vatican Council, became one of the decisive turning points in his life. From then, Jang and Bishop Ji worked together in order to make the lay-driven church. They translated the documents of Vatican II, educated the faithful and the farmers, and started the credit union movement in the diocese. Like this, in the 1960s his social engagement was closely linked to the Church and inclined to the so-called traditional class struggle to some extent. Moreover, as the authoritarian regime that seized power in the coup used more repressive measures to prolong its ruling, the political conflict between the regime and the dissident intensified in the early 1970s. This escalation also led Jang Ilsoon and Bishop Ji to

actively engage in the anti-dictatorship struggles from 1973. At that time Wonju was regarded as the centre of the democratisation movement. However, Jang recalled that these political movements in which he was involved in the 1970s were unsuccessful in the end (Jang I. 2009, 163). Although he gave no adequate explanation for his remarks, from the interviews with his disciples, it can be said that his rationale was twofold. First, the rural communities, on which his social movement was founded, eventually disintegrated under socio-economic pressure as a result of unbalanced economic growth in the 1970s (Kim Y. 2014). For him, reconstructing the community was as important as achieving political democratisation. Second, he was somewhat critical of the political activist groups and their aggressive way of struggle. According to his son and disciples, it was another method of resistance at a different level, which had been embodied in his existing thinking. While it is difficult to spell it out from the secondary explanation, it seems that he tried not to give up human dignity and lose his faith in human nature in the face of tyranny.

Concerning Jang's practice during the 1960s and 1970s, another important point is that the Church was actively engaged in the farmers' movement as a secular one since its inception. The Catholic farmers' movement that began in the mid-1960s was re-organised as a nationwide Korea Catholic Farmers' Movement (CCFM) in 1972. In this process, the Benedictine Congregation of *Sankt Ottilien* provided financial and public support. In many ways, the Spirit of the CCFM is related to the Benedictines'. In 1975, the then executive director of the CCFM contributed to a magazine published by the CBCK and explained its spirit and aim:

[The] CCFM works on the grounds of love and justice, the teachings of Christ. This love and justice should be realised not by words but by actions. Also, this should be revealed in praxis changing and dealing with our neighbours' day-to-day problems and human conditions. For this reason, our aim is to realise true love and justice for evangelical order and farmers'

humane progress in the series of economic poverty, social isolation, cultural lack. (Lee G. 1975, 40-41)

Since then, the CCFM joined in with the protest against the regime's agricultural policy and for the benefit of farmers in disintegrated and marginalised rural communities. The authorities oppressed the farmers' movement and it became an anti-government protest movement. The CCFM viewed national division as linked to the reality of rural communities, thus it also became involved in the reunification movement. Further, the Church approved CCFM as an official ecclesiastical organisation under the guidance of priests. Like this, the Catholic farmers' movement could expand on a national scale through ecclesiastical unity (Lee G. 1975, 39-40; Jeong J. 2008, 95-96; KDF 2009, 2:395-396). One of the crucial activities of the CCFM was related to the cost of rice production. Indeed, the dictatorial regime tried to cut the price of rice, the CCFM consistently investigated the price and strongly resisted, to guarantee a fair price. Despite the constant surveillance and sabotage by the authorities, the CCFM held an annual rally in local churches in the form of a thanksgiving feast. Like this, farmers and democracy activists could join together with local churches' assistance (Jeong J. 2008, 99-100).

Another damaging effect caused by growth-oriented development was the destruction of agriculture and disintegration of the farming community, which had been regarded as the cradle of Korean traditional culture and economy. Far too little attention has been paid to growth-oriented development and its influences on agriculture and the farming community.

It must also be remembered that industrialisation was achieved at the cost of agriculture and farmers in many ways. In the beginning, the Park regime expressed an interest in agricultural growth and farming programs with the purpose of building

public support after the coup. A new agricultural law was introduced and agricultural-related governmental bodies were newly established. The purpose of the agricultural policy was to improve agricultural productivity and to increase farm income. During the postwar era, Korea had been under the US Food for Peace Program and it changed from grant aid as emergency food assistance to credit assistance as economic assistance.<sup>10</sup> As a result, the Park regime had to strengthen the farming industry to deal with food insecurity. In practice, it reversed government policy on agriculture as the Korean economy was industrialised. A glaring example of Park's agricultural policy was keeping the price of staples artificially low. This policy weakened the state of the economy of already impoverished farmers and accelerated rural exodus, with the result that it could provide a ready supply of the workforce for the sector of industry (Lee Y. 2011, 357-359). That could also lower the cost of living and keep wage levels low for the sake of industrialisation. Indeed, statistics indicate that 7.5 million farmers moved into urban areas between 1962 and 1975 (Hwang B. 2006, 496). Further, the regime opened agricultural markets in the 1970s, which resulted in reducing the food self-sufficiency rate and decreasing agricultural autonomy. Accordingly, Korean farmers became more impoverished as a result of growth-oriented and unbalanced development during the 1960s and 1970s. Farm households were saddled with huge debts and regional inequality and disparity widened, with the result that Korea experienced social disintegration in the farming community and a 50 percent decrease in its rural population during the 1960s and 1970s (Korea Democracy Foundation [KDF] 2009, 2:620-628).

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<sup>10</sup> This program, also known as Public Law 480, is a US food aid program, which started in 1954 to dispose of a surplus of government food stocks. Currently, it is not a program based on surplus food supplies any more, but a program funded by the regular federal budget. (<http://foodaid.org/resources/the-history-of-food-aid/>)

Meanwhile, in the early 1970s, Jang Ilsoon strove for a campaign that aimed to ensure sustainability of farming communities in the Catholic Diocese of Wonju, encompassing his home and deprived rural villages in the east of Korea. In the summer of 1972, when the Club of Rome sounded the alarm about the inexorable global progress without environmental awareness, the central inland region of Korea was struck by devastating floods, including vast areas of the Diocese of Wonju. While supporting flood-hit communities, Jang Ilsoon launched a campaign for economic reform of rural communities disintegrating under unbalanced growth. It seems that he expected that social and economic issues of rural communities arising from the regime's growth-oriented development could be tackled and solved by the local community-based cooperative movement. Its ultimate aim was to foster economic autonomy and to strengthen social cohesion in disintegrated farming communities (Jang I. 2009, 204). In the first phase of the project, his plan was to allocate material resources to rural communities and to educate farmers for the purpose of preventing disintegration of farming communities and of coping with economic deprivation. However, the campaign had limited success owing to insufficient agricultural policy and rapid social change. In 1977, Jang realised that a community-based cooperative campaign might be another form of anthropocentric desire without philosophical foundations, as already seen in developmental fever, against the environment. His reflections on unsuccessful campaigns in rural communities led him to realise the necessity for fundamental transformation and the importance of actualising his philosophy. Consequently, what Jang acknowledged through such reflections and practical failure was that the fundamental idea of life would be an essential part of the future movement against unsustainable development, and should involve contextual factors and religious values. However, it was not until the early 1980s that Jang's

vision for an ecologically responsible community was realised as the first cooperative movement based on urban-rural solidarity in Korea.

### 1.3. Radical Tendencies in the 1980s

The dictatorial regime collapsed tragically in 1979 but another military junta came to power in spite of public eagerness for democracy.<sup>11</sup> As the student activist groups became more ideologically slanted or left-leaning in the first half of 1980s, Jang Ilsoon, once an emotional prop of the activist groups, was denounced as a revisionist and they seemed to split up due to misunderstanding between them (Hwang D. 2014). However, a recent study on his shift suggests that Jang Ilsoon faced the realities of the impoverished and disintegrated rural communities due to the growth-driven economic policy in the late 1970s, thus its consequences could be devastating in the living conditions (Kim S. 2017, 93). Jang Ilsoon found that both socialism and capitalism neglected life and objectified humans and nature under the illusions about economic development as social progressive. Since then, he stressed the need for reassessing life and community, thus he and his friends strove to begin the consumer co-operative movement that highlighted the value of life by bridging the rural and urban communities. Most of his recordings of lectures and writings that are left over to date were made during the 1980s and 1990s; hence his idea has been

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<sup>11</sup> President Park Chung Hee was assassinated by the director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency on October 26, 1979. In the fragile political situation, there was another military coup led by Jeon Duhwan on May 17, 1980. South Korea returned to democracy in 1993 after thirty years of military rule.

easily portrayed in terms of the consumer co-operative and life movement (Jang D. 2014). However, it must be noted that his bitter experience in the socio-political context of modern Korea brought about his well-known change that occurred in the 1980s, from which his thought was developed, and there will be a more detailed explanation in chapter 5.

In 1980, an ardent disciple of Jang Ilsoon and a leader of the 1970s student movement, Kim Jiha was released from prison and returned to Wonju, and he realised that his master had prepared a paradigm shift. Especially, the Gwangju Democratic Uprising and the regime's bloody response reinforced Jang's thought as it will be described in chapter 5. On 18 May hundreds of students and citizens spilled into Gwangju's main streets, situated in the southwest part of the Korean peninsula, and rallied against the military regime, agitating the repeal of martial law. General Jeon's military junta commanded airborne troops to commit an indiscriminate attack on civilians. It resulted in a new heavy-handed military dictatorship through the 1980s. Like his predecessor, Jeon Duhwan's regime carried anti-communism based on ideological differences and social mobilisation or mega events such as the Asian Games and the Olympics, and its following tendency caused economic inequalities and intense social change. But there was complacency within the military regime so that it deferred the revision the constitution to authorise direct presidential elections in 1987. It triggered massive protests and the military regime chose violent suppression as they did in Gwangju in May 1980. Eventually, in June 1987 the Korean society achieved a transition to democracy. Despite this, the opposition parties were divided and lost the presidential. After a series of disappointing events, the paradigm shift in Jang and his working group of social movements began in earnest. As Cumings commented about 'a June breakthrough' in 1987:

South Korea's middle class has been growing rapidly with industrialization and urbanization, but it remains difficult to specify its political tendency. Elements in it gave critical support to youthful dissidents in the June 1987 mobilization, but also faded from the streets once the elections terminated. Disaffected sectors of the middle class include small and medium-sized businesses run roughshod over by the state and the conglomerates, the regionally disadvantaged, families that cannot make ends meet and educate their children, parents observing the clubbing the students (theirs or others'), and the like. Much of the recent growth in Christian believers (now about 25 percent of the population in South Korea, with most of the growth since 1970) has come within this class or aspirants to it, and the witness and sacrifice of important church figures has doubtless galvanized parts of the middle class in favor of democratization. The middle class tends to be mostly salaried and bureaucratic, however, and has a slim basis for independent resistance against the state. Furthermore, it is a prototypical nouveau social formation, far more intent on making money than on contesting for power. (Cumings 2005, 393)

In this respect, it can be said that Jang Ilsoon started value-oriented movement that focused social reconciliation and civilisation-level change, which was based on the development of his religious perception on life, owing to the political helplessness, ideological differences and economically subjugation in the early and mid 1980s. Indeed, Jang's Wonju group issued a statement about life movement and launch a movement as formal democratisation was declared in June 1987. Such an attempt triggered off the establishment of *Hansalim*, a consumer co-operative, which tried to propose the outlook of eco society and to newly promote the value of agriculture. It also aimed to establish a trusted relationship between consumers and farmers and to present a new vision for urban-rural living community movement in Korea with rampant mass production and consumption. After all, Hansalim has played a pivotal role to switch consumer co-operative movement from profit-centred to value-centred (Yun H. 2013, 352f).

#### 1.4. Conclusion

As was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, it is significant to spell out historical experience that had affected Korean society throughout the twenty-first century in order to grasp Jang Ilsoon's social thought. This chapter has provided the background of his ideas, which had been shaped by the colonial experience on a personal level and the influence of nationalist education in his early years; and his resistance to the developmental dictatorship, which shattered his educational and political aspirations. As regards his life, a common view amongst interviewees was that Jang Ilsoon was an educator once and had yearned for one. As explained earlier, this could have been influenced by his nationalist education that aimed to achieve independence under the Japanese colonial rule. After the Korean War, the first thing he did was to establish a school in his hometown based on the belief that individuals and society can be transformed and enhanced gradually. However, there has been no discussion about this aspect of his life due to the lack of information. If more biographical and historical information can be obtained later, further work would need to be done to shed new light on this aspect of his life as an educator.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in the liberation sphere (1945-1948), as an ideological conflict between the left and the right intensified over the establishment of the government, the political state threw him into the confusion. However, he seemed to be motivated by strong educational conviction rather than ideology, seeking to be ideologically neutral although politically and socially inclusive throughout his life. Religiously, it is worth noting

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<sup>12</sup> According to his son, Jang Ilsoon's family have decided not to open his archives to the public while his wife is still alive.

that at that time he renewed his interest in *Donghak*, which became the dominant focus of his thought in his last years.

In the midst of a developmental dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s, Jang Ilsoon had the encounter that decisively influenced the future course of his life, when Ji Haksoon, who was inspired by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, was named as the first diocesan bishop of Wonju. Under the dictatorial regime, it can be said that the Church led him to engage in a pro-democracy movement and a social reform movement. However, no previous studies have shown how the Second Vatican Council and the Catholic social doctrine affected him in practice. Again, this fact shows us the focus of the chapters that follow. When the dictatorial regime came to an end, Jang Ilsoon seemed to recognise the danger of conflict, dissension and exclusion, which had been embodied in the movement in which he had been involved. This drove him to reconsider what he had done, thus he could provide a blueprint for a new social reform through the co-operative movement from Wonju. When talking about this issue, one of the questions much mentioned among interviewees is whether either *Donghak* philosophy or *Seon* Buddhism exerted a profound influence on the change of his ideas. This will also be considered later.

Over the last decade, conflicts over historiography have escalated within Korean society. It seems that they are aimed at ensuring historical hegemony: how the colonial legacy can be interpreted politically and to what extent the developmental dictatorship affected the modernisation of the country. For this reason, in the history of modern Korea, a political and an ideological excess has blurred the boundary of historical interpretation, and it is not an easy task to elaborate the change and development of Jang's thought in such a socio-historical context.

Karl Popper pointed out that interpretation is of importance because it represents our way of thinking (2002 [1945], 542). In the current chapter, we have found the background of Jang's thinking by observing and interpreting some biographical events in the socio-historical scene. And it has shown from what contextual basis his thought or way of thinking emerged. The subsequent chapters, therefore, move on to discuss how his life and thought, and at least his way of thinking, interacted with three different religious ideas: Catholicism, *Donghak*, and *Seon* Buddhism.

## Chapter 2

### Modern Catholic Social Thought

*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church,  
and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.*  
— Matthew 16.18

This chapter concerns *Rerum Novarum*, the first response of the Catholic Church to social issues, and *Gaudium et Spes*, the last conciliar document of Vatican II, customarily considered as the most important reference to the central principles of modern Catholic social thought. This chapter first gives a brief overview of theological and pastoral importance and the contribution of these two documents, and emerging social principles that the Church developed in line with them. Particular theological attention to *Rerum Novarum* and *Gaudium et Spes* is linked to the focus of this study, precisely Jang Ilsoon's life whose family converted to Catholicism in his early years, as explained in the previous chapter. There is also a consensus among interviewees that the most influential person in his life was Bishop Ji Haksoon, the first diocesan bishop of Wonju whom he met in 1965. His life began to interact with Catholic teachings after Vatican II ended. The Diocese of Wonju was established to commemorate Vatican II and Ji Haksoon was a young bishop who was inspired by the reformative teachings of the Council. Their encounter brought Jang Ilsoon to the fore of the socio-political scene in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, it is evident that the legacy of Vatican II has had considerable influence on his social thought, for Bishop Ji was known to request Jang to translate the documents of the Council and to teach

them to lay people. Hence, another aim of the chapter is to describe how the legacy of the Council has been understood, interpreted, and applied in the socio-political scene of Korea, for the later discussions of how Jang Ilsoon internalised its teachings and adopted the praxis in the process of social involvement of the Church.

### 2.1. The Beginning of a New Path: *Rerum Novarum*

In reality, the name for that deep amazement at man's worth and dignity is the Gospel, that is to say: The Good News. It is also called Christianity.  
(RH 10)

As Pope John Paul II stated in his encyclical letter, Christianity began with the ontological rediscovery of the divine love for humanity. The foundation of Catholic social thought lies in this self-understanding. Indeed, in the late nineteenth century, the Church faced emerging social issues and recognised its mission in the light of such a theological conviction. While it is arguable that there has been a distinct way of thinking or acting in response to society in the Christian tradition, it is generally accepted that Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891 was the starting point for the Church's intervention in modern society (Furlong and Curtis 1994, 4).

In the nineteenth century, devastating consequences on the social dimension arose in the wake of the political and industrial revolution in Europe. For instance, industrialisation that interacted with capitalism later produced the working class and caused the fundamental changes to the social structure. Indeed, as working population of Europe increased twice, in the nineteenth century, this surplus labour left the

fragmented traditional agricultural community and the feudal system in an economic sense, dependent on social interdependency, and moved to industrial urban areas. In consequence, rapid urbanisation occurred and the working class were forced to adapt themselves to a new type of society (Misner 1991, 7ff).

Ecclesiastically, the occupation of Rome in 1870 resulted in undermining the political position of the Papacy in a unified Italy. In the wake of the occupation the liberal ruling class of the unified Italy regained the temporal power from the Vatican so that only its spiritual authority solely remained intact. Moreover, Italy, where 60% of its population were engaged in agriculture, faced the inevitable consequences such as the agricultural depression and the disintegration of agrarian society in consequence of Western Europe's industrialisation (Holmes 1997, 235-236). The miserable conditions of the farmers, who were the key support base for the Church, and the workers, who became a pastoral object of the Church, made it reflect upon its pastoral implications and primary social function within modern society. The Church's perception of such changing social conditions explains the background of *Rerum Novarum* (cf. Shannon 2011, 128-133; Alexander 1953, 331-340). Consequently, in the course of the nineteenth century, the Church seemed to be called upon to respond radically to newly emerged issues of the industrial revolution. This pastoral, but somewhat moderate in political sense and traditional in ideological sense, response is Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*.

[...] All agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor. (RN 2)

This introductory section clearly shows the dominant theme of the document. Under the social circumstances in the *fin-de-siècle*, the workers became 'a yoke little

better than slavery itself' (RN 2). Leo XIII begins his discussion by providing a frame on which a clear understanding of the object of labour is given. He first spells out socio-economic conditions in which capital and labour, the affluent and the deprived, the controlled and the subordinated are contrasted. For Leo, the object and motive of labour is to acquire private property and for workers to generate wealth with wages as the result of their labour. It is clearly evident that the principle of private ownership is seen as a basic human right under the eternal law and the power of God and according to the law of nature. In this respect, the communisation of private property, as socialists argue, is to renounce the object of labour and to plunder their right and hope. Further, it is opposed to the Church's traditional theological conviction (cf. RN 4-8). Like this, it can be seen that Leo views the controversy over private property as a fundamental social issue. In this respect the pope proposes that a starting point for the Church's remedy against Marx's idea should be the sacrosanct right to private ownership.

Our first and most fundamental principle, therefore, when we undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property. This laid down, we go on to show where we must find the remedy that we seek. (RN 12)

Additionally, Leo XIII's argument proceeded from his rejection of socialism that remained a threat in post-revolutionary Europe. In the course of the nineteenth century the Church was in confrontation with socialism, which sought to influence the farmers and workers in the wake of industrialisation, in relation to the social question, such as class struggle among the newly emerging social classes, and their conflict of interest and the intermediary exploitation of the marginalised and deprived labourers. Hence, it is largely accepted that *Rerum Novarum* is the Church's answer to the socialism. Yet, according to Dorr (2012, 21-22), Leo's stance, denying two extreme

economic systems, gave him considerable ideological latitude, that is, Leo was prevented from drawing criticism from his liberal critics and at the same time he disapproved of the way capitalism was carried out. Indeed, in many ways Leo expresses his concern over liberal capitalism and its exploitation of workers as Chadwick pointed out (1998, 312) that in a united Italy, Leo's formidable enemies were the *bourgeois*.

In this regard, another major focus of *Rerum Novarum* is the desperate situation of exploited workers in substandard conditions. While there is little doubt that in the encyclical, Leo's intention is to lighten the burden of workers at that time (RN 33-41) or to suggest a solution to their problems, he does not specify that the Church stands on the side of the working class. He condemns socialists for inciting class antagonism and stirring up class warfare, affirming that the Church seeks social cohesion and integration. For him, it is reasonable that there exist social difference and distinction at different levels. Despite this, human dignity cannot be destroyed, for all human beings are equal before God (RN 18). Indeed, some arguments in the encyclical tend to approve the stratified and unequal social order (RN 14) because, for Leo, it is his core concern to bridge the gap between social classes, financially and emotionally. In order to realise this, he proposes public awareness about social interrelation and reciprocity. This shows that the Church values social stability. As Dorr's analysis indicates (2012, 23), to a considerable extent Leo's social spirituality can be 'escapist.'

[the Church] teaches the laboring man and the workman to carry out honestly and well all equitable agreements freely made, never to injure capital, nor to outrage the person of an employer; never to employ violence in representing his own cause, nor to engage in riot and disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles, who work upon the people with artful promises, and raise foolish hopes which usually end in disaster and in repentance (RN 16)

In the encyclical, Leo repeatedly asks the workers and the poor not to become involved in violent revolution or disorder. Rather, he asks them to accommodate the reality with an act of piety, reminding them of ‘eternal things,’ (RN 16, 32, 42) and asks the more prosperous for benevolence. Such an argument illustrates the importance of religion, in particular the Catholic Church, in calling for social justice and the common good. In dealing with this, Leo extends the existing frame of discussion from being the workers’ representative of the poor to poverty as a phenomenal concept. Traditionally, the Church was the centre of education and social work and thus it coped with the problems of poverty that was inevitable due to the economic system (RN 23-24). However, in the wake of the industrial revolution the Vatican was demanded to take an alternative viewpoint on poverty. In a sense, it unwillingly accepted that a systemic cause underlay all the social issues, although the Church still taught that poor people had better put up with their lot for the reward of eternal life. In historical terms, it needed to redefine its role as the Christendom ended and its temporal power passed on to the state. For the Vatican, poverty was regarded not as the result of sin or moral failure, as existing theological understanding taught, but as the problem of the social structure. Thus, it is arguable that rampant poverty is its responsibility, representing the reactionary defender of the *Ancien Régime*, as socialists denounced at that time. In this sense, *Rerum Novarum* affirms that limited state intervention or cooperation is necessary in order to deal with social issues. Yet aside from a legitimate role of the state that is proposed in the document, the Church assures that its role is indispensable in order to bring the workers relief for their condition, to alleviate systemic poverty, and to maintain the social order stable (RN 22).

One of the important contributions of Leo's encyclical is to recall human dignity, which remains a basic foundation of Catholic social thought. According to Curran (2002, 9), since Leo's encyclical was released, the Church has established relational anthropology as a central guiding principle of modern Catholic social teachings, whose basis is on human dignity and social nature of humanity. In *Rerum Novarum*, changes in its theological and historical stance with an emphasis on human dignity are related to the denial of the extremes of individualism and liberalism. For the Church, those dangerous ideologies were considered as the consequences of economic and political revolution in the nineteenth century. Collectivism was also believed to cause collective madness of human reason to come out. At the time of Leo XIII, individualism and collectivism were dominant ideologies in Europe, thus it is the primary concern for the Church to protect human dignity in response to radical ideas. Also, as explained above, the avoidance of the extremes of these ideologies allowed more latitude in adopting its stance. In turn, such theological attention has been conceptualised as theological anthropology and has played an important role as the theological backbone in modern Catholic social thought.

Here it must be noted that in the encyclical the Church denounces liberal individualism. The meaning of 'liberal' refers to individual opposition to every form of political absolutism, thus it includes the clerical absolutism of the Vatican. Generally, in individualism an individual as a rational being can resist political oppression and social deviation when the social order seems to be preposterous. In this sense, for liberal individualism the object of opposition can be the Church, in which the irrationality and the traditional universality were revealed. This sense of crisis led the Vatican to express its criticism of individualism that was deeply linked to the laissez-faire liberal economy. In fact, the value of an individual was maximised

in an economic sense under the influence of industrialisation in the nineteenth century. Growing competition for the sake of the *bourgeoisie* developed class ideology demanding limitless freedom and rights and invoked class struggle. As such, it is natural that the Church developed a negative conception of individualism in the light of human dignity and the social nature of humanity in the Catholic tradition.

Furthermore, individualism is germane to Protestant theology. In Catholic tradition, the Church considered its role as a mediator in the divine-human relationship to be essential. Like this, the social or communal nature of human beings was underlined in the dimension of faith and ecclesial hierarchy. However, as individual spirituality was stressed in the divine-human relationship after the Reformation, the Church's role as a mediator of the paschal mystery in the faith community was minimised. In a way, for the faithful, independent and internal spirituality was feasible as the importance of scripture and the intellectualist tendency of faith were emphasised; in turn, ecclesiastical hierarchy and human social nature were partly denied by Protestant individualism. It seems that the Church concluded from its reflection on society that such internalisation of faith and unbalanced emphasis on its value in humans' relationship with God, could be combined with social issues in the modern world, such as industrialisation, stratification, urbanisation by elective affinity, and wider ethical issues. In this sense, self-centred, escapist, morally and spiritually irresponsible, and fragmented faith may be conceived of as another type of individualism to be overcome.

It can be said that in *Rerum Novarum* Leo XIII places emphasis on the Church's social role as an alternative, by challenging dominant ideologies. In turn, the papal document influenced the development of Catholic social thought in a substantial way. In the long run the impact of the encyclical has been unexpectedly enormous so

that the Church has witnessed irreversible shifts in political, ethical and theological terms. As Chadwick (1998, 315) said: ‘under the umbrella of his encyclical radical thinkers pursued their arguments almost wherever they wished to go.’

## 2.2. A Discernible Shift: *Gaudium et Spes*

The Church and theologians are still taking part in the theological brawl over the implications of the Second Vatican Council and its legacy on the present theological and social scene, whilst half a century has passed since the Council culminated in 1965. This is because theological themes and conclusions that emerged from Vatican II are still controversial in the light of the Church’s theological inertia and tradition. The Council promulgated sixteen documents in four segments. Despite the fact that these documents are often dealt with together, in theory they can be categorised by a given ecclesial authority. The four pastoral constitutions of Vatican II fall under the highest rank in terms of their ecclesial authority. In fact, for over half a century there have been numerous studies on the conciliar documents and the Council itself from various aspects. But it is impossible and unnecessary to explore those studies in this section since it is beyond scope of this research to deal with such treatments in depth. Hence this section is concerned mainly with *Gaudium et Spes* in which the social dimension of the Church has been affirmed, and in which its social engagement has been fostered thus far.

*Gaudium et Spes*, arguably a new teaching, was promulgated on December 7, 1965 and it was by far the longest document of the four constitutions issued by the

Council. Unlike the ordinary process, this pastoral constitution was proposed during the first session and then went through continuous intense theological debate among bishops and theologians from every part of the world. Moreover, it was not an easy task to organise the official position of the Council by arranging and consolidating theologically opposing opinions (cf. Hastings 1969, 15-18; O'Malley 2008, 232-238, 264-268; Hollenbach 2005, 270-271). Consequently, it was not satisfactory to all, but in this conciliar document the Council clearly expressed its pastoral concern about contemporary issues in the wider social and cultural domains.

The pastoral constitution begins with analysing the signs of the times, regardless of intense debate over the controversial nuance of this abstract phrase 'the signs of the times' in an eschatological sense, which shaped 'the context for theological reflection and pastoral action' (Lorentzen 1994, 407; cf. Curran 2002, 59-60). These signs exacerbated the situation and the realities of humankind just as the document noted:

As happens in any crisis of growth, this transformation has brought serious difficulties in its wake. Thus while man extends his power in every direction, he does not always succeed in subjecting it to his own welfare. Striving to penetrate farther into the deeper recesses of his own mind, he frequently appears more unsure of himself. Gradually and more precisely he lays bare the laws of society, only to be paralyzed by uncertainty about the direction to give it. (GS 4)

Yet it is difficult to spell out adequately the complex reality of change and conflict in modern society. Despite this, what the Council clearly recognises is that the Church seeks to adopt a pastoral approach based on mutual understanding between the Church and society in connection with dramatic social change. Between the Church and the world there is reciprocal interaction. It is unimaginable the Church could be disconnected from the world and it is also unthinkable the world could be unaffected by it. In essence, the Church and the world influence one another.

On the religious dimension, existing Catholic tradition and piety was rather individual and the soteriological focus of the Church was mainly on that. On the contrary the pastoral constitution demonstrates why a pastoral and practical attitude is demanded of the Church with the concept of the kingdom of God and the people of God (GS 40-45; Hornsby-Smith 2006, 43). According to the conciliar document, the Church is called to reform and to enlighten the world by proceeding with the work of Christ in human history and applying the mystery of the Resurrection to the reality. In essence, the Church called for social involvement in the secular world (Hastings 1969, 24f). At the same time the Church needs to reinterpret the mystery of the incarnation and its modern implications in the world rather than assess and act on the brink of real social and existential chaos. As the constitution proclaims, ‘the Church always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel’ (GS 4).

Additionally, *Gaudium et Spes* stated that temporal matters too often beget and intensify imbalances in every sphere of society. Ultimately, this imbalance is linked to the innermost problem of humanity as the pastoral constitution argues that ‘the truth is that the imbalances under which the modern world labours are linked with that more basic imbalance rooted in the heart of man’ (GS 10). Like this, human conditions that the Church analyses cannot be explained as material or physical tension and confrontation. In this regard, social, cultural, and political insecurity, and dichotomy pose the basic questions regarding the human person (GS 8-10). In responding to the questions, in spite of various themes explored, the focal point of the pastoral constitution is ‘man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will’ (GS 3) in line with Leonine ideas. In the course of the

anthropocentric era the Second Vatican Council closed and it proposed Christian anthropology as a new theological theme to theologians and to the Church.

In the conciliar document, Christian anthropology is developed on the basis of the theological affirmation that humanity was created ‘in the image of God’ (Genesis 1.27). In the light of strong religious conviction, every human being basically depends on the Creator and possesses the ability to recognise and love him. Humans are also social beings ‘by their innermost nature,’ who are responsible for establishing horizontal relationships with other creatures through their reflection of their vertical relationship with the Creator (GS 12). However, the Church argues that humans, whose existential nature is relational and social, abuse their freedom given by God in creation. As a result, human nature is distorted and the divine-human relationship is damaged so that humans serve other creatures rather than the Creator. This can be another key principle of Christian anthropology. Such existential distortion leads to the destruction of human nature and the balanced relationship with other creatures; in turn human life and community have to accept the consequence of sin. In this sense humans long for restoration of their original relationship with God and the salvation of their fallen existence in their ordinary life (GS 13). Indeed, the part of the document mentioning humans as sinners was included during the last session of the Council. It seemed controversial to add the doctrine of sin when the Church had started a conversation with society. In this regard, the constitution can be criticised because in a doctrinal sense, original sin, social sin, and the universality of sin were not clearly mentioned and explained properly. Despite this, the Council claimed that original sin and social sin cannot destroy human nature. For this reason, a contrast between *imago Dei* (the image of God) and *hominum peccatorum* (sinners; cf. Luke 24.7) clearly indicates the Council’s intention to propose a theological perspective

based on the dignity and the tragic reality of the human person in an anthropocentric but imbalanced modern society, and to promote communion on a social level.

A theological contribution of *Gaudium et Spes* is related to a methodological shift. In short, since *Rerum Novarum* the ecclesiastical documents concerning social issues have demonstrated the way in which human reason connects to God by interpreting humanity and society in the light of natural law, despite its conceptual ambiguity. Modern Catholic theology, deeply imbued with neo-Thomism also proposed that the human person can be understood in the divine plan and at the same time their nature and universal plan can be revealed through human reason from the perspective of protology in a way (Curran 2002, 23-25, 54-60; O'Meara 1997, 160-199).<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, *Gaudium et Spes* moved its traditional methodological 'centre of gravity' from neo-scholasticism to historical cognition based on human experience, including the work of Christ as a human being in the world, using scripture and patristic sources (Hollenbach 2005, 276-277) For many, it is significant in the long term that the pastoral constitution integrates biblical evidence with philosophical components in terms of theological methodology as it remains intact in later papal documents (Dorr 2012, 128).

Another notable feature of *Gaudium et Spes* is its special emphasis on human conscience rather than human reason in relation to human dignity (GS 16, 26, 41,62). Human conscience is hailed as 'the most secret core and sanctuary of a man' and human reason is acclaimed as 'the master of his own acts' in Leo's encyclical (GS 16; cf. RN 6).

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<sup>13</sup> Neo-Thomism or neo-scholasticism refers to a school of philosophy within the Church, which tried to apply Thomistic teachings to modern social conditions in the twentieth century.

In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems, which arise in the life of individuals and from social relationships. (GS 16)

The human being is originally destined to God, and can hear the divine voice and can feel his divine presence. This leads humans to foster love and concern for God and neighbours and to obey moral conscience in community. Like this, human conscience becomes ‘the subjective norm’ for human morality (Lorentzen 1994, 410). In addition, according to *Gaudium et Spes*, human moral conscience can commit an error through ignorance. Humans can lose their dignity by habitual sin (GS 16). In this regard the Church argues that the value that reveals human dignity can be found in the incarnated Word of God. Christ is the visible representation of the invisible God and the true and perfect man (Colossians 1.15). The mystery of the incarnation is founded on the fact that Christ was born to Mary and he thought, loved, behaved like us with a human heart (GS 22). In this sense the Church’s Christological reading of society is based on the fact that Christ himself faced human suffering, ultimately death; structural political contradiction; and on the faith that his social nature was realised in his historical context. Consequently, such an approach laid the foundations of Catholic social thought that the Council sought to develop in the constitution.

In *Gaudium et Spes* one of the notable features of modern society is the constantly growing human interdependence. Social, political and technical progress promotes interdependence among human beings, and human progress is based on mutual respect for human dignity. Revelation and the Christian tradition have also stepped forward to enhance the understanding of the relational nature of humanity and to present the spiritual and moral nature of humanity and the mystery of creation in both history and everyday life. Indeed, the Bible provides plausible arguments for communal nature and the objects of human social nature are specified as neighbours

and God (GS 23-25; cf. Roman 13.9-10; 1 John 4.20). In this respect, *Gaudium et Spes* continues lines of understanding developed in *Rerum Novarum*.

In the light of humanistic theology or theological anthropology, three basic principles of the Church's dialogical approach to the modern world become apparent, as Dorr (2012) points out. Firstly, Christians and the Church are required to respect the autonomy of the state in the secular world. Historically, no checks and balances might be found in the relationship between the Church and the state in Western Europe. However, in his encyclical *Leo XIII* recognised that state intervention proved necessary in order to handle social problems. It is evaluated that the conciliar document became a stepping-stone to the social involvement of the Church in the light of mutual respect between it and the state for the sake of the kingdom of God (GS 72, 75, 76). Secondly, in Christian tradition the Church and Christians tended to view the world in an eschatological manner. However, in the pastoral constitution the social mission of the Church is not to replace the social order but to enhance the common good with the intention of making the world full of the righteousness of God. Thirdly, the Church needs to be involved in various social and cultural scenes. In the pastoral constitution, it was thus acknowledged that the biased and irrelevant perception of multicultural modern society can bring about a distorted understanding of humanity and disintegration of the community. To deal with this, the continuing emphasis on justice and love, in Christological terms revelation and grace, at a socio-cultural level is also important in terms of ecclesial mission (Dorr 2012, 128).

It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private in situations dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life.  
(GS 30)

In *Gaudium et Spes* two classic principles of modern Catholic social thought based on humanistic theology are advanced at various levels: subsidiarity and solidarity. Although these principles are briefly presented in the pastoral constitution, such ideas have been placed in a socially, politically and culturally diverse context of local churches so that in reality the concepts had an enormous impact on Christian social engagement, specifically in Latin America and Asia, as we can discuss in the next part. Additionally, *Gaudium et Spes* affirms (cf. GS 3, 4, 26, 30, 32, 38, 42, 43) that these conventional principles need to be understood in a complementary manner, providing a conceptual framework, as Hollenbach points out (1994, 192). Taken together, it seems a vital contribution to modern Catholic social thought (Lorentzen 1994, 413; cf. Boff and Elizondo 1986; Dorr 1994, 755-759; 2012, 124-177; Gutiérrez 1983; GS 63).

Next, I provide a general discussion of the principle of solidarity, the guiding principle of modern Catholic social thought. It is generally considered that the principle of solidarity is firmly wedded to the principle of subsidiarity from the practical perspective owing to its ‘working through and connecting’ characteristic (Hornsby-Smith 2006, 104).

The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfil their duties. This principle is imperative because every person, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community. (Compendium 187)

For the Church, the term subsidiarity is generally conceived of as a flexible concept for the authorities or the state to protect individuals and basic social groups and to intermediate their competing interests or rights. In a nutshell, the individual precedes the state and the individual does not exist for the state’s sake. Rather, the state exists for the sake of the self-realisation and well-being of the individual

(Allsopp 1994, 927). In addition, the central premise of this concept is that basic social units, such as individuals and families, become more subordinate in the modern world. As an example, the Church has traditionally stressed the importance and centrality of the family. Yet in reality the family as ‘the first and vital cell of society’ and the cradle of life, love, and faith has disintegrated and its social value and responsibility have been reduced and abdicated (cf. Compendium 213-214). For this reason, political authorities or communities in a functional sense are necessary so as to realise different interests at different socio-political levels, and the common good, ultimately. This concept of social philosophy has been present as the most constant and distinguishing principle of Catholic social thought (Compendium 185; QA 79). Since in Leo’s encyclical, the Church partly accepted the state’s intervention in order to improve the workers’ conditions, and has acknowledged its positive aspect of judicial and economic intervention. Nonetheless, it has noticed that excessive state intervention or immoderate assistance can result in threatening its traditional social roles such as social care and education. Accordingly, the Church strives to set safe limits to ‘unjustified and excessive’ intervention of the state (Compendium 187). Despite this qualification, it is significant in some ways that the Church admits the structural exploitation of the less advantaged, particularly the working class or the precariat, state intervention in relation to the realisation of the common good; and just social order in line with *Rerum Novarum*.

Throughout his encyclical Leo acknowledged state intervention in order to remedy human circumstances under which human dignity was ruined and human rights were neglected, in turn he exalted the importance of paternalism. Nonetheless, his successors strove to redefine the proper role of the state in order to curb uncontrolled intervention and to promote the Church’s social status and political

security. For the Church, the state can resort to intervene in social issues to make up for deficiencies. By the same token, the individual has an inviolable right to organise and associate for God-given existential value. Yet the existential value of the state takes precedence over that of the individual, for the state violates and limits these rights. Unintentionally, the Church faces the reality in which human dignity conflicts with social nature in existential terms, and the change of political and social context brings about a new dilemma for theological anthropology. In this regard, it seems that Vatican II sought to apply the principle of subsidiarity as a flexible concept in a theological manner to the modern world. Again, the Council realised that it was not preventable to abuse ‘the weak link’ of the principle in local churches so proposed a traditional but theologically new concept as a guiding principle of Catholic social thought.

Nineteenth-century Catholic social theorists, such as H. Pesch and G. Gundlach, used the principle of solidarity to differentiate Catholic social theories from socialism and liberalism. In the nineteenth century, moral relativism and nihilism encroached as liberal capitalism dehumanised humankind and degraded the religious and social values that the Church had traditionally advocated. This ideological trend triggered collectivism, which had a tendency to depersonalise the individual; deny personal freedom and the existing social order; and subordinate the individual to collective will. Like this, plurality of individualism and uniformity of collectivism resulted in a dramatic change of the perception of the state in a negative sense. In the wake of a continuing malaise of capitalism and socialism and political chaos driven from ideological polarisation, the concept of solidarity, meaning ‘the essential mutuality of human beings,’ was redefined and emerged in the work of Catholic social thinkers (Lamb 1994, 908; Misner 1991, 324-325).

As the firstborn of many brethren and through the gift of his Spirit, he founded after his death and resurrection a new brotherly community composed of all those who receive him in faith and in love. This he did through his Body, which is the Church. There everyone, as members one of the other, would render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each. This solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother. (GS 32)

The way in which the Council understands the principle of solidarity throughout *Gaudium et Spes* is closely related to the work of Christ, thus in Christological terms, the principle is mainly pastoral (Lamb 1994, 910). In this sense the Church emphasises that the social nature of humanity and communitarian character are completed in Christ's work. In everyday life, Christ showed his Father's love and sacrificed himself for his Father's plan or the common good. In the light of his work, the Church asserts that love is the fulfilment of the law and within love it exists as his body (GS 32; SRS 38; Compendium 196). In this sense the Church as the metaphorical body of Christ, and humankind as his eschatological body are interconnected and in the statement a theological aspect of solidarity is highlighted (van Klinken 2010, 446-447). Moreover, the concept of the people of God, which emerged in *Gaudium et Spes*, also demonstrates that the faithful and the non-faithful equally become both the subject of the realisation and the object if the value of solidarity is realised in the modern world. In essence, all humans are responsible for all. And this ontological conviction provides the basis for a metaphilosophical, ethical, ecological, and theological discussion of solidarity. What is more, if Christ's work of salvation can extend to all creatures beyond humankind, modern understanding about the concept of solidarity, focusing on universal responsibility as human nature and on structures of sin, can be extended in terms of metaphor or praxis. In fact, in a continuation of this discussion, John Paul II affirms that the

principle of solidarity can be exercised in specific contexts and from the perspective of universal interdependence (SRS 39). In this sense, the theological discussion about solidarity can be extended to ethics of responsibility and societal change. Chapter 5 will grapple with this issue that arises from Jang's ideological shift.

### 2.3. Conclusion

As a starting point to understand the background of Jang Ilsoon's social thought, in this chapter I have provided a brief explanation of Catholic social thought, by exploring Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, which was acclaimed as 'the decisively important encyclical' by John Paul II (LE 1), and *Gaudium et Spes*, a 'best compilation' of modern Catholic social thought. As observed in the first part it is important that the foundation of Catholic social thought is based on anthropological understanding in theological terms. In *Rerum Novarum* the Church concerns the reality in which the rights and dignity of human beings created in the image of God are disregarded. In this process, Leo XIII proposes the social role for the Church in response to communism and individualism, which are opposed to traditional theological understanding of humanity. This endeavour made by Leo and Catholic socialists led the Church to recognise a relational anthropology, in turn the Church could take a major step forward in Vatican II. In *Gaudium et Spes* the Church seeks to read 'the signs of the times,' destroying human spirit and inflaming existential conditions, and tackle the issues in the light of the work of Christ. In order to this, the council fathers analysed, challenged, and deviated from the pastoral constitution.

Further, *Gaudium et Spes* paved the way for development of two guiding principles of Catholic social thought with considerable emphasis on the social nature of human beings. The concepts of subsidiarity and of solidarity have been developed and contextualised among churches in opposition to dictatorships in Latin America and Asia. This shows in these principles how local churches have striven to respond to their social and political circumstances. Indeed, the Church in South Korea during the 1970s and 1980s embodied these principles in the socio-political scene.

In April 2016, Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation was released but there seems an unbridgeable perceptual gap between the reality and the Church's teachings as there was with Leo's 125 years ago. In that regard, as James O'Connell pointed out (1994, 71), Catholic social thought seems not to be Catholic, rather it is a mere suggestion by the papacy. In every aspect, the Church has dealt with social issues in a defensive or non-committal manner, or arguably in a pastoral manner. Despite this, society often calls on the Church to be socially responsible, and rarely to draw up moral guidelines, in a country like Korea where the Church has been in alliance with the authorities. Indeed, in the light of Revelation and grace, it is natural that the Church's social vocation and existential purpose are realised in the specific context of local churches. As for the ecclesiastical relationship with society, the Church came to the fore in the political scene of the 1970s and 1980s Korea, but in recent years it has become remarkably conservative and conformist. In this regard, as O'Connell observes, the permanence and intention of Catholic social thought still remain questionable in the Korean context. Notwithstanding some historical caveats, from a Catholic perspective, the most crucial point made so far is that the social doctrines and practical legacy of Vatican II emerged late in the social scene, and

behind the social involvement is not the Church but rather the individuals inspired by the Council.

The next chapter will deal with *Donghak*, which emerged from social chaos in nineteenth-century Korea, and its influences on Jang Ilsoon. Whilst it is commonly known that Jang sought to follow and seemed disposed to be like Haewol, who was the second leader of *Donghak*, in his last years, this is one of the most controversial themes in his life and thought.

## Chapter 3

### *Donghak* in Jang Ilsoon: Focusing on Haewol's Philosophy

In 1991, Jang Ilsoon was diagnosed with cancer of the stomach. While he fought against the disease, he often told his visitors that he was living along with cancer because it was also a part of life (BMP 46:33). For him, life is a seed of all things and the origins of existence. All things in the universe originate from one life that cannot be separate from one another. Hence, mortality is nothing but his return to where he came from, and to bear another form of life as he was assured (Lee Y. 2011, 184-5). This belief is based on *Donghak*, specifically the teachings of Choi Sihyeong (hereinafter called Haewol), the second leader of the religious movement. Jang Ilsoon encountered *Donghak* when he was studying at university in 1946. According to him, one of his friends worked at the Cheondogyo propagation centre in his hometown (Jang I. 2009, 146).<sup>14</sup>

*Donghak* was founded in 1864 by Choi Jeu (hereinafter Suun), a Confucian scholar and a descendant of fallen gentry, after he received divine revelation in 1860 (Chong K. 1971, 73). Historically, the term *Donghak* (Eastern Learning) refers to learning of Korea, for Korea was called the 'eastern nation,' and its history and

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<sup>14</sup> In 1905, Son Byeonghee, the third leader of *Donghak*, changed its name to Cheondogyo in order to distinguish its religious identity from the failed peasant rebellion of 1894 to a new organised religious movement.

medicine, 'eastern history' and 'eastern medicine' respectively (Kallander 2013, ix). A recent study defines *Donghak* as 'a religion, a philosophy, and a socio-political phenomenon that attracted Koreans across class, age, gender, and geographical boundaries' (Ibid., xiv). As Chung Kiyul claims in his theological and philosophical analysis of *Donghak*, its main characteristics are that it is 'minjung (people)-centred, liberation-oriented, and socially transformative' (Chung K. 2007, 100). *Donghak* was regarded as a radical, heretic religious movement in its nascent days. From a historical perspective, it acted as the ideological background of the *Donghak* Peasant Revolution sweeping over the country in 1894, for *Donghak* was an ideology based on the practical aim to *bogukanmin* (promote the national interests and provide for the welfare of the people) on the brink of national crisis. In the period of the rapid expansion of Western imperialist powers in East Asia, what Korea witnessed was growing weakness of China that had been in a centre of politics and culture for millennia in East Asia. As the geopolitical order and power abruptly shifted, a great interest in the West, especially Catholicism known as *Seohak* (Western learning), developed in spite of constant suppression by the authorities. Yet Korea held neither the cultural power to confront the new hegemony nor the philosophical depth to embrace or reinterpret it, while Confucianism, which had been the ruling idea of society for over half a millennium, had decayed and lost its value as the basis of the social order (Kallander 2013, 16-23; Beirne 2009, 24-26). In the socio-political scene, the royal sovereignty was under threat as bureaucracy was corrupt and the exploitation by the ruling classes was intensified, which resulted in constant popular uprisings. Moreover, the driving ambition of imperialist powers around the country continuously increased (Beirne 2009, 15-18). In this context, *Donghak* aimed to

tackle the religious or moral decay of society and to obtain ideological independence and autonomy from foreign ideologies (HWSB 13; Kim Y. 2012, 10).

This chapter mainly focuses on the reform-driven ideas of *Donghak* on the grounds of its general definition as a religious movement. *Donghak* was a philosophy to bridge the ideological gap between a feudal and a modern society, and its defining tenet was genuine equality regardless of one's initial place in the social structure. Yet, in his detailed examination of Haewol's idea, Kim Youngcheol (2014, 248) points out that *Donghak* iterates an existential and unconditional equality. Through autonomous participation, this radical tendency of *Donghak* could establish an alternative principle of life and a new religion when encountering the realities of *minjung*. In effect, *Donghak* could be a driving force behind a historical rebellion led by the people who accepted it as an alternative to existing religions. Since its inception, *Donghakdo* (believers) had kept the *Donghak* doctrine flexible and loose. Indeed, they tried to embrace existing conflicting religious ideas, but their undeniable aim seemed to be socially radical. Many who accepted *Donghak* were excluded from the Neo-Confucian social order and were socially otherised. In the end, *Donghak* can be inherently radical in socio-political terms yet at the same time it can be an inclusive but original idea from a religious perspective.<sup>15</sup>

As for Jang Ilsoon, perhaps the most important fact is that, as many of interviewees agree, for him *Donghak* in general was of little interest.<sup>16</sup> Instead, his major concern was to follow Haewol's life and to rediscover his thought (Hwang D.

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<sup>15</sup> Arguably, *Donghak* might have a religious linkage with existing religions such as Confucianism, Daoism, Shamanism, and even *Seohak*(Catholicism). However, as Suun named his *do* (Way) *Donghak*, this suggests he intentionally distinguished it from *Seohak*. In this respect, the reason he used existing religious concepts, particularly Confucian terminology, is because it could make his teachings more familiar to his audiences.

<sup>16</sup> In Korea, it is commonly assumed that *Donghak* is a rebellion against the monarchy and foreign powers rather than a religious philosophy.

2014). In this sense Haewol's teachings, specifically his vision of social transformation based on a holistic approach to the world and humanity, can be one of the essentials to understand Jang's social thought. Nevertheless, in practice, in the history of this socially influential religion, Haewol's philosophy has been undervalued in comparison with its founder's. Indeed, one of Haewol's major contributions to *Donghak* was the publication of the *Donghak* scriptures, which will be discussed later. While he was on the run, he collected his master's verbalised records and published them. Consequently, that transformed, or at least challenged, the characteristics of the religious group that Haewol led. In brief, as Walter Ong (1982) highlights in his classic critique of oral and writing cultures, the Haewol-led grassroots group with scriptures and its ideological contemplation could be more 'dynamic' than the early *Donghak* community, from a social perspective. To return to an early point, it can be said that certain aspects of Haewol's philosophy of *Donghak*, and his life relating to the proliferation of *Donghak*, were brought to light and reassessed by Jang Ilsoon. Haewol's philosophy was represented in Jang's ordinary life in the midst of social and political unrest in the 1970s and 1980s as Haewol had reinterpreted his master's teachings in the ordinary life of *minjung* a century ago.

In this chapter, I grapple with the way in which Haewol's philosophy shapes Jang's commitment to social transformation from below, and his ideological shift in his last years. This chapter thus begins by sketching Haewol's life and thought.

### 3.1. A Brief Biographical Portrait of Haewol

Choi Sihyeong was born in Gyeongju in the southern part of Korea in 1827 (Pyo Y. 2014, 165). Sihyeong was a new name he gave himself after preaching the wisdom of time in 1875, and Haewol was his honorary name (Kallander 2013, 100). Haewol lost his mother at the age of six and was brought up by his stepmother. He also lost his father when he was 15 years of age, and had an underprivileged childhood working as a farmhand with his sister (Yun S. 2014, 33). It can therefore be assumed that such experiences in childhood affected his way of understanding *Donghak*.

For the first millennium, Gyeongju was the capital of Silla (57 BCE-935 CE), the longest ruling dynasty on the Korean peninsula, and it was a historic city as it was called *donggyeong*, meaning the capital of eastern Korea. During the period of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), the city was the centre of neo-Confucianism as there was one of the largest Confucian academies in Gyeongju. However, it is believed that Haewol had little decent education due to his disadvantaged childhood. In his late teens, Haewol worked at a paper mill in his hometown. A short time later, he went to the backwoods and lived by slash-and-burn farming in order to support his family. This deprived life he faced continued until he met the founder of *Donghak*. At the time, the conditions of the people like Haewol were atrocious in every aspect. The lower class was obliged to endure a rigid status system and stratification, which were deep-seated in society, and despotism of the exploiting class. However, in a way it is probable that the success of *Donghak* in the late nineteenth century was attributed to his experiences. It is also possible that there existed an emotional connection between

Haewol and the marginalised group, similarly to the bond between his master and socially excluded Confucian scholars.

In June 1861, Haewol heard the story of a spiritual master in Gyeongju and visited him. This meeting marked a turning point in his life, and in the history of *Donghak*. In turn, this religious movement triggered the largest peasant revolution in 1894 and helped the independence movement in 1919. After the impressive meeting with Suun, Haewol started cultivating his mind through his master's teachings. He chanted the twenty-one-word incantation, fasted, and did penance because he wished to experience the mystical trance as his master did. He eventually heard mystic sound of voices but he realised that it was not from Heaven but from his master's words (Pyo Y. 2014, 174-177). From this experience, he seemed to have a new understanding of his master's teachings.

Although I heard *hanul*'s words several times, now I reckon I was so primitive that I was not able to reach the Way. You can compare *hanul*'s words with your words only by comparing the right thing and the wrong thing. If you rule your wrong heart with the right thing, anything will be *hanul*'s words. (HWSB 37.5)

Pyo Yeongsam (2014, 178-180) holds the view that Haewol's realisation was to revise a conventional notion of the world. Like his master, Haewol, who was eager for divine encounter or mystical experience, learnt that humans exist in a single domain of this world, thus the truth can be sensed in the human mind. The mundane world can be sacred if *hanul* (Heaven) is immanent in this world. This shook fragmentary, or dualist, worldview and conventional perception. For him, it was clear that the existential value of humanity and the holistic understanding of the universe can be perceived in the human mind. Indeed, Haewol sought to apply this idea to the actualities and to reinterpret it in terms of the traditional social structure, as we discuss later in this chapter.

In 1863, Haewol became the second leader of *Donghak* although his religious quest had started two years ago. However, the outlawed organisation was fractured after its founder was executed in 1864. Here, Haewol and his role must be re-evaluated in terms of the history of *Donghak*, as noted before. For thirty-six years Haewol was on the run and propagated *Donghak* until he was arrested in Wonju in 1898. In particular, from the early 1870s to the 1880s Haewol collected the founder's words, writings and recitations, and published the scriptures of *Donghak*. Moreover, its organisation was reconstructed and the rites were established, and *Donghak* spread as a result of his determined effort. In terms of the development of *Donghak* philosophy, Haewol reinterpreted his master's thought on the basis of reality or some argue, in a metaphysical way (Kallander 2013, 101). To the people, this creative process stamped *Donghak* as a religious belief with strong practical ethics, which resisted the maladies of society and placed a high value on ordinary life whereas previously it was mystical, abstract, and shamanistic.

### 3.2. Revolutionary Aspects of Haewol's Philosophy

The starting point to understand Haewol's thought should be Suun's teachings. Unlike his master, Haewol was unlikely to have had much knowledge of Confucianism or *Seohak* (Catholicism), for he was not a learned person owing to his unprivileged background. Despite this, in 1863 Suun initiated Haewol into *dotong* (the Way) through the rite of succession (*danjeonmilbu* in *Donghak* terms). Haewol seemed inexperienced or deficient in learning among his acolytes, but Suun

thoroughly approved of his reaching the spiritual realm of ‘feeling the Way from within and practising it happily’ (HWSB 7.3; cf. Yun S. 1994, 73-74).

In 1864, Suun was decapitated in Daegu on charges of *hoksemumin* (deluding the world and deceiving the people) and *jwadonanjeong* (disturbing and violating Confucian teachings and customs). Here it is worth noting that the authorities suppressed a newly-risen religion by using the same method to deal with a revolt on a political judgement. In a way, it seems that the authorities regarded Suun and his followers as revolutionaries attempting to overthrow the Joseon Dynasty (Oh M. 1996, 55-56). It may be the case therefore that certain ideological or doctrinal features of *Donghak* caused discomfort to social elites. Thirty years after the execution of Suun, *Donghak* came to the fore of growing political resistance and social reform under Haewol’s leadership. As he roved the country to propagate his master’s teachings for thirty-six years, *Donghak* spread like wildfire. In this sense, a likely explanation is that *Donghak* changed the minds of ordinary people and put hope into their miserable lives.

Again, Haewol’s thinking was firmly founded on Suun’s teachings. Suun’s teachings is believed to be transmitted by dictating instead of writing. Thus, it is rather doubtful, considering Haewol’s social status and education, that he published *Donghak* scriptures and wrote without assistance of his acolytes such as literati and Confucian scholars, although one of his classmates suggests that he got a formal education from an early age. There also is recent evidence to suggest that he possessed knowledge of the Korean style of Chinese (Pyo Y. 2014, 166-167). A lengthy discussion on Haewol’s literacy is beyond the ambit of this study, but it is worth noting that demoralised *Donghak* might have been dissolved in the early stage without Haewol’s commitment to his master’s teachings (Beirne 2009, 153-155). The

history of *Donghak* shows that Haewol continuously sought to publish *Donghak* scriptures and to record its history regardless of the fact that he could not but hide from the authorities after his master's execution and intense persecution. Haewol was believed to play an essential part in the history of *Donghak* as *Donghak* discovered its identity as an organised religion. In spite of the extremely high illiteracy rate in Korea at the time, his publication of scriptures led *Donghak* from a mystical community to a popular established religious community that aimed for social change. The *Donghak* community could revisit its role, direction and social aims, and redefine itself through this change. In the end, in the process of reading, communicating and thinking carefully about *Donghak* scriptures, the religious community became radical in order to realise its idealistic imaginations (Jeon S. 2015, 126; 138-9). In this regard, it is no exaggeration to say that Haewol's life and thought looked in one direction. Although each conceptual level is different in his philosophy, the essence of his philosophy is resistance, embodying social structural revolution from below and existential change from the human mind. In the pages that follow, I try to examine how the salient features of his thought can be understood under the conceptual umbrella of resistance.

### 3.2.1. *Sicheonju* and *Yangcheonju*

It is no exaggeration to say that the concept of *sicheonju* (serving Heaven) is both the pillar of Suun's teachings and the bedrock of *Donghak* philosophy. This key concept provides a solid platform for structuring *Donghak* philosophy. Literally, the term *sicheonju* is a combined word for *si* and *cheonju*. The Chinese character *si* refers to *mosim* (serving) in Korean, thus the term is defined as serving *cheonju*. The term *cheonju* might refer to *hanul*, whom Suun encountered through the divine revelation

in 1860. It is thus necessary to clarify what is meant by the term *hanul*. Unfortunately, *hanul* remains a poorly defined term among *Donghak* scholars, although it literally means heaven in Korean. While there has been little agreement on that, *hanul* is the most preferable and the broadest concept, which refers to a transcendent being as well as a spiritual energy immanent in the universe. In the present chapter, the term *hanul* is used interchangeably to mean *cheonju* (a personal and transcendent god) and *jigi* (a divine energy). Returning to the earlier subject, serving may carry two different meanings in the Korean language: putting in a specific place and serving faithfully. The former can be understood in an existential sense, whereas the latter in a moral or ethical sense. As Suun explained this idea to the Confucian intellectuals who visited him in 1861:

*Si* means having the Divine Spirit within and expressing the vital force in life. When people realise this, they will keep it in their hearts without change. *Ju* refers to respecting, honouring, and serving God like one's own parents. (NHM 13)

Suun simply conceives of the idea of *sicheonju* as the human existential status of humanity. In the same vein, a recent study suggests that there can be found the dimensions of being (*Sein*) and duty (*Sollen*) in *sichoenju* (Lee J. 2015, 318-9). These two aspects are complementary parts of *sicheonju*, thus they can be significant for a foundation of *Donghak* anthropology and ethics. For Suun, the existential aspect of *sicheonju* is emphasised, whereas its practical aspect is highlighted by Haewol. Haewol developed the concept of *yangcheonju* (bringing up *hanul*) to enhance his master's *sicheonju* in the socio-political context. Despite the difference of literal meaning, Haewol shares his understanding of *hanul* with Suun and *hanul* is conceived of as the object of faith and the essence of existence. Haewol argues that his ideal world of *insicheon* (humans are *hanul*) can be realised when serving (*si*) *hanul* and

growing (*yang*) *hanul* at the same time. In the vortex of rebellion, such an idea, which made them reflect on their existence and everyday ethics, posed an existential challenge to Haewol and his followers, who desired a society in which humans would become *hanul* and their mind would become the mind of *hanul*.

It is also necessary to spell out a simple but rather metaphysical framework of *Donghak* in order to understand *sicheonju*. In early *Donghak*, its philosophy viewed the origin of the universe as the life force, which can be defined as an organic, relational, and spiritual reality. This all-embracing vision of the world might include totality and individuality, and transcendence and immanence at the same time (Choi M. 2009, 8-9). In *Donghak*, this notion is based on its distinctive conception of *hanul*. Again, the terms *hanul*, *jigi* and *cheonju* are interchangeable in Suun and Haewol's teachings. As previously mentioned, Suun explained that the word *cheon* literally means *hanul*, and *ju* is an honorific form attached to it (NHM 13; Pyo Y. 2005, 109-112). In addition, Suun's *cheonju* was often referred to as *Sangje*, a traditional divine concept in China and Korea, whom people had believed in for several hundred years. *Jigi* is also the term that Suun used in order to explain the origins of life, from which the universe is created and through which it is operated. In *Donghak*, all things in the universe can be understood as self-replication of the life force and actual output of its self-evolvement and systematisation. In this sense, 'a monistic power immanent in the universe' has been a widely held definition of *jigi* (Kim Y. 1978, 19). For this reason, Suun confusingly used these terms to describe different aspects of *hanul*.

Later, Haewol developed the concept of *hanul* and conceived of it as the roots and the ultimate cause of the universe. He affirms that *hanul* and earth is a mass of spirit and *hanul* is the origin of the ten thousand things. Clearly, his idea is in line with his master's notion. Yet, in a sense, his understanding of *hanul* highlights its

characteristic of immanence. In his thought, *hanul*, *cheonju*, and *jigi* can be understood as the various forms of modality of life (HWSB 4.1-2, 22; NHM 12). In essence, this nature of *hanul* can be an intrinsic value of humanity and *hanul* can be found in the human mind.

Pertinently, the concept of *sicheonju* stems from the idea that humans are only able to exist within their relationship with *hanul*, which is regarded as the origins of the world and the roots of life (Oh M. 1996, 58). From this perspective, Haewol focuses on the relationship-centred nature of *sicheonju*. He points out that there exists life as the cause of existence in the midst of the relationship. He also extends the human relationship with *hanul* to reality and focuses on the relational feature instead of distinguishing ontological differences between humans and *hanul* because it is necessary for *hanul* to be found in people's ordinary life as spiritual energy immanent in the universe. Haewol, as a newly appointed leader of an emerging religion, faced existential risk after the founder was executed. To reconstruct the disintegrated, persecuted, and demoralised religious group, it was essential that Haewol developed his master's doctrine on a practical basis to overcome the mystical and shamanistic aspects of early *Donghak*. Thus, in his understanding of *Donghak* doctrines, there seems to be practical reason behind it. During his life on the run for thirty-six years, he might meet people who barely managed to make their livings under severe exploitation. His efforts for proselytisation relied upon how to bring *Donghak* to their actualities. And Haewol seemed to be well aware of the realities of his times. In this sense, this could have been the catalyst for *Donghak*'s political and religious role in Korean society. Indeed, the religious group sought to overturn the conventional value system based on the concept of *hyo* (filial piety) and *chung* (loyalty), which had been embedded in Korean society for over five hundred years. Furthermore, in terms of the

history of *Donghak*, it led Haewol to shift the emphasis from numinous experience at the personal level to numinous experience at the societal level.

In this respect, the idea of *sicheonju* can embrace social progress and religious involvement for social change because *Donghak* is a philosophy that is closely linked to the harsh reality of the people. Indeed, Suun, primarily emphasised the causal link between the human mind and all things. Haewol also asserted that the human mind is the main agent of everything in this cause-and-effect relationship (HWSB 4.8). He stated that even ups and downs of life come from a manner of the human mind (HWSB 37.18). This could be relevant to all societies in which people are oppressed and show how *Donghak* emerged from the context of the Korean people. To put it another way, *Donghak* focused on what was necessary for the people of the late nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the Confucian view was different from this emerging religion. Confucianism emphasised on the human mind and its cultivation, and aimed for a more stable society led by its values, not for a more dynamic one. But in *Donghak*, there is a strong tendency towards social responsibility and social change. Suun, through his mystical experience, realised that *hanul* exists in the human mind and at the same time it exists everywhere in the universe. He affirms that this *hanul* that is unrestricted from time and space continues to evolve in a repeated cycle of rise and fall in the universe. According to him, its own nature is change, and thus it is the inevitable feature of *hanul* as well as humans.

As noted before, while rebuilding *Donghak* after its founder's execution, Haewol, as its second leader, developed Suun's idea of *sicheonju* and formed the concept of *yangcheonju*, which literally means nurturing *hanul* (Kallander 2013, 100-112). This metaphysical but practical notion, which is based on how to understand *sicheonju* and to actualise it in ordinary life, is conceptualised as the idea of

*samgyeong* in a religious way. This notion means ‘respect three things or show reverence for three things.’ Indeed, *gyeong* (respect) is a commonly used notion in Confucian ethics. Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that *gyeong* refers to ‘an intentional attitude,’ in other words, ‘a way to treat the object of respect with seriousness’ (Chan 2006, 240). However, in *Donghak*, it refers to the action of the human mind, which knows that humans are another expression of *hanul* (Oh M. 1999, 115). This shows that Haewol also emphasises the aspect of organic ontology in a sense, but the point moves to the human relationship with the universe. The idea of *samgyeong* consists of three features: (1) *gyeongcheon*, (2) *gyeongin*, and (3) *gyeongmul* and its objects are *hanul*, humans, and nature respectively (HWSB 21). Implicit in these concepts is the assumption that humans and the universe are united spiritually. For Haewol, the existing dualistic approach such as subject and object, faith and praxis can be overcome on the basis of this ontological assumption (Oh M. 1999, 118ff; Beirne 2007, 157). First, *gyeongcheon* is to realise the fact that the universe already exists in the human mind in the belief that all things are united. Haewol affirms: ‘The heart is the nature of heaven [*hanul*] that is within me. Heaven, earth, and everything between were originally one heart’ (HWSB 8). In this sense, *gyeongin* and *gyeongmul* become the natural conclusions of *gyeongcheon*. As noted before, the central tenet of *Donghak* is *sicheonju*, which denotes that humanity is the most spiritual and precious being. *Donghak* also teaches that there is no ontological superiority among God, humans, and nature. This could be ironic but valid on the grounds of the holistic worldview of *Donghak* (Lee G. 2011, 37). In explaining this radical worldview, Choi Minja borrows an interesting concept from Ashvaghosha, a first-century Indian philosopher and poet, in her comparative study between *Donghak* and modern science. She hypothesises that the substance of

the universe is consciousness and its direction of progress is spiritual evolution (Choi M. 2002, 279-280). In *Donghak*, there is one spiritual substance inherent in the universe and it is understood to be *hanul*, immanent in nature and in the human mind.

In this respect, *gyeongcheon* is to realise *hanul* in the human realm, thus it can develop into *gyeongin* and *gyeongmul* in the light of the interconnectedness of all things. This philosophical stream of *Donghak* signifies that religion should lead to the change of paradigm at the spiritual level, while modern science seeks to solve the mystery of the universe at the material level. It can thus be said that *samgyeong* is a concept developed from our epiphany of *hanul*. If humankind tries to find the answer to fundamental questions about *hanul* within us, we could revert to the question about society and humanity, or we might be requested to reconsider our interrelationship with the universe in a practical manner. It is clear from observations offered above that the core of *samgyeong* is relationship, and one of its implications is not only to reassess the status of human beings in the universe but also to put God and nature in the right place.

Heaven and earth are parents. Parents are heaven and earth. Heaven, earth, and parents are one body. The pregnancy of parents is the pregnancy of heaven and earth. Nowadays, people only know the principle of the pregnancy of parents, and they do not know the principle and life force of the pregnancy of heaven and earth... Heaven and earth are the parents of all beings. Therefore, the scripture says, 'That which is the Lord deserves their respect and behaves as our parents.' (HWSB 2)

Additionally, Haewol reiterated his teachings to serve *hanul* like parents in the light of *hyo* (filial piety), which was one of the pillars of society and culture. In the period of the Joseon dynasty, the ethical foundation of neo-Confucianism was *hyo*. As Zhu Xi interprets in his commentary on the Analects, the basic aim of *hyo* is to respect and serve one's parents well (as cited in Gardner 2003, 71). Further, this concept is the fundamental principle that controls all human relations, as Weber

observed (Weber [1915] 1951, 157). In the light of this, the conception of *cheonjibumo* is an effort to develop the idea of *sicheonju* to the level of practical ethics and to teach it to the people in the ordinary dimension. It literally means that *hanul* (heaven) and earth are parents (HWSB 2.1). For Haewol, *hanul* is life and the spirit of all things in the universe (HWSB 4.1-2). In a way, Haewol borrows neo-Confucian idea of *gi* as his master did, to some extent (Kim Y. 2003, 116-7). Haewol adds that *hanul* is immanent as spiritual energy (*gi*), which is expressed differently in all things in the universe. *Hanul* can thus be understood as the life force embracing the universe, which exists as spiritual parents producing and bringing up all things. At the centre of this idea, there is the ideal of Confucian ethics that one must respect and follow one's parents in every level of society. As the roots of all things in the universe is *hanul*, the closest roots of humanity are parents. In a nutshell, all things and parents are identical in terms of his interpretation of *hyo* (Choi G. 2000, 31-2).

Haewol also looked at another important aspect of the idea of *hyo*, which is that children's lives are from their parents' and children are identical to their parents' remaining beings. Thus, respect for one's parents must be concluded with respect for oneself. As for the idea of *cheonjibumo*, serving *hanul* as parents suggests serving it in one's mind. In this regard, it may be that Haewol's teachings of *cheonjibumo* is a result of accepting the Confucian concept of *hyo*, a traditional ethical tenet. As *Donghak* faced widespread public criticism of heresy, it could deflect it on these grounds. Further, Haewol asserted that the idea was needed as neo-Confucianism gradually fell (HWSB 3.3). This indicates that Haewol's teachings reflects the realities of the late Joseon dynasty adequately. It thus can be seen that the philosophy of early *Donghak* gave weight not only to a radical change of social structure but to moral reflection of a person and moral restoration of society. This is why Haewol's

thought is important in relation to Jang Ilsoon's ideological shift in the late 1970s. In essence, Haewol's understanding of *sicheonju* seems to be an answer for his neighbours who lost their existential value, as was written in a memorial to him.<sup>17</sup> Humans, who possess divine origin and spiritual nature of life, should consider how to treat all things in the universe as parents. That shows why Haewol's philosophy is regarded as an ontologically radical idea.

### 3.2.2. Radicalness of *Bap*

Even though several studies thus far have focused on his thinking, especially his views of humans and God, in illuminating Haewol's philosophy, it appears that one of the most neglected aspects in his thought is resistance. However, the social value of his thought has been revisited of late, as more recent attention has focused on various social and political aspects.

In the late nineteenth century when the fate of the nation remained undecided, Haewol's teachings fostered the common people's desire to reform the structural contradiction and to resist their grim realities in late Joseon society. This means not only political resistance to the declining feudal dynasty and its unjust oppression over five hundred years and to imperial powers aiming to coerce Korea to open its ports, but also spiritual resistance to inner obstacles not to serve *hanul*. In *Donghak*, the encounter with *hanul* begins in the human mind and thus it is reasonable that such an ontological change expands to society. In this regard, another significant aspect of Haewol's thought is to resist in a social dimension.

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<sup>17</sup> In April 1990, a memorial to Choi Sihyeong was erected by a club led by Jang Ilsoon in Wonju. It is written: 'in remembrance of master Haewol, friend of every neighbour.'

As Kim Jiha, Jang Ilsoon's favourite disciple, said, 'By work, *hanul* becomes humans and humans become *hanul*.' *Hanul* works through all things and works to create and reconcile all things in the universe. Haewol too affirms that *hanul* is at work and all human labour, including the struggle for social renovation, is the work of *hanul*. This is another conclusion of *Donghak*'s anthropology based on the *insicheon*, meaning that humans ought to do *hanul*'s work as human work and *hanul*'s work cannot be separated. All work is divine, thus vivifying all things regarded as *hanul*'s work is also human work. All things in the universe including human beings share this life and its existential value. The existence and characteristics of *hanul* are closely related to the condition of human existence. In this sense, it can be said that *hanul* suffers when humans suffer. In *Donghak*, this can also be applied to the community, thus *hanul* groans when the entire community groans. Haewol himself experienced suffering of the common people and he saw *hanul* was in suffering in the context of late 19th-century Korea. It also appears that his philosophy of life accentuates resistance to social oppression and existential risk, not acquiescence to reality.

Through life, *hanul* is at work. In this sense, *bap* (a bowl of rice), which is made through *hanul*'s work, is a good example of value and principles of life. This is why Haewol said that consuming *bap* is knowing everything (HWSB 2.11). It is evident, from the perspective of everyday language, that Koreans use the same verb *jitta* to describe cooking and farming. They say *bab-eul jitta* and *nongsa-reul jitta*, respectively. This verb is used with even human affairs such as sin and marriage. Furthermore, for the people in the period of Joseon, *bap* was directly linked to their life. It was a main offering of ancestral rituals and a staple of daily meal regardless of their social status. In this sense *bap* is a medium of mystery and ordinariness, and holiness and worldliness. For instance, the final process of ancestral rituals is called

*eumbok* (drink offerings). During this event, the participants partake in the ritual food including *bap*. This is an integral part of the religious event, which symbolises that this world and the other world, past and present, and death and life merge in one place and at one time. In terms of religion, *bap* is to show mystery in the ordinary life. It is thus the most sacred and the most profane. Through *bap*, social and cultural homogeneity can be created and in *bap* there can be found emotional but temporary equality, overcoming social stratification.

More specifically, after the ceremony the participants consume *bap* offered to the spirits. This symbolises that the spirits and humans are united when these rites take place. At the moment, with *bap* as a medium, the boundary of space between this world and the other world and the boundary of time between past and present disappear. Also, humans are comforted spiritually and emotionally as the fear of death and of oblivion, which all human beings face, encounters the earnestness of life. Through repeated and learned spiritual experience the participants can obtain communal faith so that they too are remembered. All this process take place through *bap*. After all, they can come closer to spiritual mystery, which helps them to overcome the suffering of this world. In this way *bap* strengthens communality among the participants in order to share the joys and sorrows of this life and to prepare together for the life to come.

It is significant to note that *bap* is a medium and it helps religious mystery to be embedded in daily life. Again, *bap* is the most sacred and the most profane. That is what Haewol discovered from *bap*. Haewol proposes a fairer world where there is even no difference between holiness and worldliness. All in life is equal including nature, and thus Joseon's social stratification is against *Donghak's* teachings. Such defiant nature of Haewol's philosophy emerges where it meets oppressed reality. Like

the firm belief that humans are *hanul*, the spirit of resistance is hidden in his strong belief that *bap* is *hanul*.

### 3.2.3. *Hyangaseolwi* as resistance

Particularly, what I like is *hyangaseolwi*. That is a great revolution against every established religion. For all time we set our purpose on the other side. Saying please, please, please help, we put *sinwi* [ancestral tablet] facing the wall and perform *jesa* [ancestor worship]. It is wrong. The origins of all things are in my mind, that is my ancestors are in me and every beginning is in me. You should perform *jesa* for eternal God in me. (Jang I. 2009, 213)

In 1876 the concept of *hyangaseolwi* appeared for the first time while Haewol discussed the reform of Confucian ritual, especially *jesa*, with his followers (Oh M. 1996, 264-5). In 1392, Joseon was established and it accepted neo-Confucianism as a ruling ideology. Traditionally, Koreans espoused the Confucian view of humanity in which they were linked to their forebears owing to *honbaek* (soul). Hence, they crafted a *sinju* (mortuary tablet) and enshrined it in the *gamyoo* (family shrine) or *jongmyoo* (royal shrine). *Jesa* is the most commonly practised Confucian ritual in Korean culture, which functions as a cultural device to cherish the memory of the descendents and ancestors. To perform *jesa*, participants, chosen under an agnatic primogeniture system, prepare various kinds of food on the table and place the *sinju*, facing the wall, at the centre of the table. This type of *sinju* is called a *sinwi*, which represents the presence of the *honbaek* of the ancestor, bowing to *sinwi*. This manner of the rite is known as *hyangbyeokseolwi*.

In this regard, *jesa*, which symbolises kinship and social status, can be considered as a distinguishing feature of Korean culture. It also gives transcendent, religious and ethical implications to this multi layered relationship. Indeed, the distinctive aspect of *jesa* is to transform the profane place to the sacred one and to

subsist the social order in the place of rite (Ha J. 2008, 230-2). This reflects Confucian anthropology. For example, to make *sinwi*, official positions need to be marked. In Confucianism, humans are subject to the class system and this hierarchical relationship conceptually continues after death. The process of *jesa* strengthens this hierarchical concept in a religious way.

For this reason, Haewol proposes the idea of *hyangaseolwi* against the *hyangbyeokseolwi* tradition because *jesa* binds past, present and future together and limits the possibility of social change through human independence and liberty. Also, the rite suggests a vertical static divine-human relationship, which reflects the social order of Confucian society, representing patrilineality and a rigid caste system. However, Haewol's *hyangaseolwi* redefines the divine-human relationship in terms of the here and now. There is not potential salvation or God in the place where *sinwi* is laid. God exists here and now in the human mind and salvation begins from it. For Haewol, social reform could be achieved by reinterpreting beliefs and practices connoted in *jesa*.

As noted before, Haewol reinterprets his notion of *bap* in a religious sense. In relation to this, he points out the rampant problem of *jesa*, which was a religious and cultural foundation of social discipline. Neo-Confucianism was the cultural and political basis for the society, thus *ye* (courtesy) played a crucial role as the method of social integration rather than *beop* (law). Traditionally, according to Confucianism, the essence of *ye* is separation, by which society can be integrated and stable. Ritual is a foundation of *ye*, and especially ancestral rites are recognised as the heart of ritual. Indeed, most classical texts concerning rites are related to ancestral rites. One function of ancestral rites is to establish and to justify the social order of Confucian patriarchal society. Thus, the sequence of rituals is discriminatory by social status.

Basically, this religious attribute plays a significant role to internalise social status order, and Confucianism made ancestral rituals sacred for social and cultural legitimacy (Kim M. 1999, 220-224). In ancestral rituals, humans encounter a deity in an unusual way. Haewol simplifies and revises abnormality, specificity, sanctity, and mystery embedded in ancestral rituals. He also opens the possibility of divine encounter in ordinary life. Simply, during ancestral rituals one enshrines one's ancestral tablet. Haewol proposes a radical understanding of the ancestral tablet on the grounds of *Donghak* philosophy. He revises the basis of Confucian society radically and popularly. While practising existing rituals, people place their ancestral tablet toward the wall. In this sense, ancestral rituals can be understood as the realisation of a mystery in which they encounter a spiritual being of the other side or in the transmundane world. However, Haewol proposes the idea of *hyangaseolwi* on the basis of *insicheon*, which means that the ancestral tablet is placed on its front, close to the person. This also means that one must meet *hanul* in one's mind here and now, not *hanul* beyond this world.

The idea of *hyangaseolwi* emerges when Haewol's thought meets its practical intention as ritual. Here can be found the hidden spirit of resistance through *hyangaseolwi*. For individuals, resistance can be identified through attitude and language, and for society, it can emerge through non-cooperation and the nonviolence movement. In terms of religion, ritual reform and practical doubt about vertical interpretation of doctrine can cause resistance. Mostly, in the process of reform within religion, an external collision with the existing social order and values can occur. In the late 1880s, *Donghak* adherents, who faced existential risk as a result of the execution of the founder, had considerable doubt about the established social order under neo-Confucianism. The majority of them were from the deprived rural

peasantry and fallen aristocrats, and they were inspired by Haewol's secular but, to some extent, practical reinterpretation of *Donghak* teachings. During the mid-1880s and the early 1890s new figures from various backgrounds had faith in *Donghak*, as a religion, spread throughout the country. Meanwhile, some followers who endorsed radical reform of reality with violent methods emerged within *Donghak*. Further, imperialist countries including Japan intentionally expressed military aggression against Korea. Ultimately such social and religious instability resulted in the *Donghak* Peasant Revolution, which broke out in 1894 under the flag of *bogukanmin* (promoting the national interests and providing for the welfare of the people). However, according to historical records of *Donghak*, the concept of *hyangaseolwi* was introduced in 1897 after the rebellion failed (Hwang S. 2009, 59-60). What was Haewol's intention of reforming liturgy after the failed militant movement led by *Donghak*? And how is resistance embodied in such a ritual?

Simply, it could be said that it was Haewol's first priority as a leader to revise existing rituals and doctrines that were related to the failed rebellion. But there seems to be a fundamental reason. *Hyangaseolwi* is originally rooted in his existing ideas. His essential argument is that what people should do first is to serve *hanul*. But it means respecting their mind, not serving the empty *hanul*. He claims that, if people respect the mind and serve *hanul*, they would find out the truth about *hanul* and life. Further, they would learn that all things are brethren and thus, it is inevitable that they would stand against the unjust world, especially the Confucian social hierarchy at the time (HWSB 21.1). As noted before, *Donghak* affirms that the power to overcome the problems of the times exists in the common people who accomplish *sicheonju*. In *Donghak*, the *gaebyeok* (great opening) of the human mind is followed by the *gaebyeok* of the community and the universe (Yun S. 2014, 240). It appears that by

the experience of failed social reform Haewol learnt that this world cannot be overcome without attaining and practising *sicheonju* first. He seemed to realise that cultivating the mind is a solid foundation for reform. For these reasons, *hyangaseolwi* can be a liturgical effort to present the social aim of *Donghak*. In the same vein, a recent study by Hwang presents a view that Haewol's reform of the ceremony is an attempt to regenerate conventional social and political ideas, hypothesising a mediator between the deity and humanity. She argues that the concept of the traditional ritual traditionally justifies the despotic rule and the subordination of the people (Hwang S. 2009, 63).

For Haewol, the invocation of the spirits of the dead upon the *sinwi* that is placed on one's opposite side in traditional ancestral rituals is pointless. It suggests that the advent of the future does not happen in the present, rather it is already realised within one's mind. In a sense, early *Donghak* followers of Haewol wasted their religious power on social reform that was an unexpected costly failure. However, they learnt from this that here and now, where the people stand and where their failure and suffering coexist, was indispensable. In essence, Haewol affirms that the *gaebyeok* should begin from the common people's ordinary life and their inner mind. And he sought to express this by holistic reform of the ritual in a radical way.

In conclusion, Haewol's principle of resistance is closely linked to a change of the traditional concept of rituals, in which the world is regarded as a dualistic image. Neo-Confucian rituals follows the dualism of ancestry and posterity, God and humans, death and life, and past and future (Yun S. 2014, 279). This results in structured subordination, ideologised rule, and internalised oppression. The concept of *hyangaseolwi* is the resistance to this distorted present and the complete negation of it. Haewol's philosophy, based on the affirmation that humans are *hanul*

(*insicheon*), aims for one world, in which repression, dominion, distinction, nor discrimination exist and in which all things harmonise, sharing one life. Thus, the initial step towards this aim is to resist the human mind, neglecting *insicheon*, and the world, threatening the dignity of all things.

### 3.3. Haewol in Jang Ilsoon

It seems that Jang Ilsoon's life is riddled with elusive hopes as it is said that looking at a problem as a problem is a starting point for hope (Han W. 1980, 174-183). He always sought to look at the essence of social phenomena, avoiding the ideological slant prevalent in his times, for his hope was deeply-rooted in sympathy for the people and their ordinary life. In this regard, my question is whether there can be found any linkage between Jang's constant hope to reform the community from below and certain revolutionary aspects of Haewol's thought.

#### 3.3.1. The Setting

In examining Haewol's influences on Jang Ilsoon, it is necessary to contextualise his concern about the times, in brief. It is generally believed that it was 1946 when Jang Ilsoon had his first encounter with *Donghak* through his friend who followed the *Donghak* faith (Kim Y. 2014; Jang I. 2009, 156). From then on, Jang Ilsoon repeatedly introduced Haewol's idea through his lectures and calligraphic works. Yet Dongcheon, the youngest son of Jang Ilsoon, holds the view that his father

only showed a great interest in Haewol from the late 1980s (Jang D. 2014). What happened then in connection with this?

As discussed in the previous chapter, Jang Ilsoon's thought gradually enters a new phase in the midst of the military dictatorship in the 1970s. In 1977, Jang Ilsoon faced the devastating realities of the rural communities and ecocide, and the limits of rural movements as a result of unilateral developmentalism and a series of state-led rural development projects. As a result, he reflected on existing social movements, especially the rural movement and the pro-democracy movement in Wonju and decided to prepare a new social movement beyond the Marxist paradigm (Jang I. 2009, 155-6; 163). Yet in the early 1980s existing groups of social movements shifted their paradigms towards an insular, radical class struggle. As this caused ideological disagreement in his group, he planned a long-term life-oriented movement whose aims were coexistence and co-operation in response to the limits of exhausting political struggle.

In 1985 Jang established a co-operative in Wonju, which directly linked consumers and producers in order to stand against the oppressive economic system and to support rural communities subordinated to distorted economic values. Indeed, for Korean society, the late 1980s was a transition period in every respect. In 1987, democratisation was achieved and the Seoul Olympics were held in 1988. Further, activists witnessed the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. As a result, most existing activist groups inclined towards a Marxist paradigm in the late 1980s faced another transition (Kim Y. 2014). In those times Jang was deeply attached to Haewol's philosophy since he found both the hidden side of progress and development, and the limits of ideological struggle. For this reason, he seems not to have turned his attention to *Donghak's* class struggle and their revolutionary idea,

from studying the failed *Donghak* Peasant Revolution in the late 1890s. Rather, he observed Haewol's utopian dream of *insicheon* when the ideal of *sicheonju* is accomplished within the ordinary. While it seems idealistic, he holds this based on the idea that humans are *hanul* and all life is connected (Jang I. 2009, 162). Indeed, it can be seen that he was attached to Haewol's thought, in some respect, through his calligraphic works and accounts. In addition, he tried to embody Haewol's thought throughout his life. In this respect, some questions arise. What aspects of Haewol's thought did Jang Ilsoon focus on? What aspects of Haewol's life did Jang wish to follow? Did he realise them in reality? Can it be possible to trace Haewol's influences on the movements in which Jang Ilsoon engaged such as the pro-democracy movement, co-operative movement, and life movement?

Haewol's life seems to be a series of resistance to different forces. This is what inspired Jang Ilsoon throughout his life. And it became the motive of his lifelong social engagement. Then, how, why, and what to resist? These might be the problems that Haewol left to him and that confront Jang Ilsoon. However, such concern did not develop into systematised thought or philosophy, at least so far. Meanwhile, Hwang Dogeun views Jang's thought as '*salme cheolhak* (philosophy of life)' (Hwang D. 2014). It does not appear that he refers to philosophical thinking about life or society in any sense. Rather, he comments that it is about one's attitude towards life that is significant in Jang's thought, as Haewol taught. He adds that this can be realised through *mosim* (serving), which stems from the concept of *si* of *sicheonju*. Thus, it could be said that the unusual combination of resistance and *mosim* underlies his philosophy. Jang's thought is linked to Haewol's practical application of *sicheonju*, and Haewol's philosophy meets reality through Jang Ilsoon in the history of modern Korea.

In this respect, Kim Jongcheol's observation can offer valuable insight. For Kim, Jang is depicted as being spiritual because his teachings are related to the way to follow, not to pedantic knowledge or habitual learning. Jang's emphasis is always on the attitude towards reality before everything (Lee Y. 2011, 23). In this sense, his holistic approach to reality can be understood as social spirituality (Sheldrake 2012, 5). Unlike his contemporaries, he never wrote books and took the lead in public. Rather, he sought to integrate words and behaviour and preferred to stand aside from the fierce ideological battle, still ongoing, that split the nation, despite the fact that he was labelled as a fence sitter, as Haewol has also been criticised (Hwang D. 2014). This section is thus concerned with how Haewol's spirituality of resistance is embodied in Jang's value-oriented activities, and which aspects of Haewol's religious or moral convictions, which mirror his teachings, motivated Jang.

### 3.3.2. Beyond Resistance

With regard to the life of Haewol and Jang Ilsoon, it is worth noting that their attempts to reform the social realities ended in failure. The 1894 the peasant rebellion in which Haewol was involved, was viciously quelled, and Jang Ilsoon was defeated twice in a row in general elections. Further, Jang watched the authorities' brutal crackdown on protesters in 1980 as Haewol did in 1894. This seemed to cause fundamental change in his worldview. He decided to implement the way of resistance amid the unstable political situation (Kim Y. 2014). Since then, his dimension of resistance was moved to 'a deeper world' as Haewol stressed the human mind and its revolutionary change through the idea of *sicheonju* and spirituality after the failure of the *Donghak* Peasant Movement (Jang D. 2014). From this, both figures intended to

restore cohesiveness in terms of religion and the community. In this sense it can be said that their spirit of resistance is rooted in the ordinary life of *mincho* (the populace or the grass roots). Jang sought to change a culture of despising life including nature and humanity within *mincho* (Lee G. 2014). His followers recollected that he was a friend of *mincho*, who shared his whole life with *mincho* (Kim Y. 2014; Jeong I. 2014). For this reason, it is known that he wished that his followers would not enter the world of politics (Lee G. 2014). Indeed, as Haewol encouraged his followers to cultivate their minds and to focus on their ordinary life for survival, Jang Ilsoon concentrated on the change of the ordinary life of the individual and community in order to reform and overcome the reality. Their failures made them doubtful about rebellious movement that was based on conventional worldview and ideology. Thus, in their view, the essence of resistance is not ethics or moral ideas but praxis based on ordinary life.

Additionally, there can be found the similarity in the way they understand resistance and apply it to their realities. For Haewol, resistance can be the product that resulted from his ontological necessity. Because his philosophy is rooted in the revolutionary worldview that humans are *hanul* and the nature of existence is that all things share one life (Jang I. 2009, 105). In a similar vein, the background of Jang's thought can be observed as he resisted dictatorship and destructive attributes of developmentalism and industrialisation. For him, dictatorship is to oppress the dignity of life embedded in social community, and ill-considered economic development is to trample on the divinity of nature and to instrumentalise life. Industrialisation is also to break the value of the inside and to materialise life. For this reason, Jang developed the concept of creative participation by explaining the notion of *sicheonju*, meaning human realisation of the principle of life that is immanent in the universe and human

participation in its activities (Jang I. 2009, 77; 105). In some senses, this can be the nature of his resistance and the reason why he claimed non-violence and non-cooperation with the authorities in order to protect the value of life. The concept of creative participation emerged in his 1989 lecture. As he interpreted Haewol's *sicheonju*:

Master Haewol stated: '*si* is *muwiihwa* [edifying without doing anything] [...] Then, what should people do in *muwiihwa*? [...] In that *muwiihwa* people should know reason and become involved in that, that is so-called creative involvement. Not for our selfish desires, it means we realise the truth that is inherent in the universe and engage in it. That is the essence of *sicheonjujohwajeong*. (Jang I.1989 cited in 2009, 78)

Literally, *muwiihwa* means that it is realised by itself without doing anything. In Confucianism, this means that the public will follow when the monarchy governs by virtue. For Zhuangzi, it refers to leaving as it is and ruling out any human work. Laozi conceives of it as doing nothing but doing something in reality. However, Jang Ilsoon's understanding is somewhat different from existing ideas. Jeon Hogeun (2015) views this as '*muwi* without calculation.' He argues that Jang seeks to depict capitalism, basically as causing competition and chaos; as developmentalism; as having a destructive tendency (BMP 55:38; cf. Jang I. 2009, 87-88). To some extent, this argument seems plausible on the grounds of his experience of the anti-dictatorship campaign, as was pointed out in the previous chapter. In his lecture in 1990, Jang Ilsoon affirmed that doing nothing meant that you did not calculate your interests, as Haewol pointed out that *muwiihwa* as a way of realising *sicheonju* in reality, was through everyday behaviour. Again, for them the essence of resistance is the attitude towards ordinary life (Hwang D. 2014). In that sense, creative participation implies that Jang's way of understanding Haewol is beyond structural resistance and criticism.

A person cannot plumb ten thousand things in everyday life. But, as you are born, a waterside flower should be at the waterside, a stone should be somewhere it should be, we just keep up our end. I think, that is to serve [...] we actually share our joys and sorrows (*dongdongrak*). These days we say *gongsaeng* (coexistence). By instinct, by sense we want to share something comfortable and joyful. But without sorrow, there is no joy. In Hansalim [a co-op] this should be here. We share together, in other words it is *gongsaeng*. And it is to treat others positively. When we do this, it is *mosim*, isn't it? (Jang I. 1990 cited in 2009, 77)

For him, creative participation is *gongsaeng* and its place of practice is the everyday life in which *dongdongrak* is realised beyond resistance to structural contradiction. It is known that Jang often said to love Park Chung Hee who sent him to jail and Jeon Duhwan who slaughtered civilians during the 1980 Gwangju uprising. Many of my interviewees said that it was not easy for them to accept Jang's remark, even Jang's son. Jang Dongcheon noted that he still could not easily understand why his father told people to love Park Chung Hee, by whom his family underwent great hardship (Jang D. 2014). Indeed, after Jang Ilsoon made such a remark, Jang Ilsoon and his group, which changed its direction as a social movement, faced numerous critics. Hwang Dogeun remembered that it was not pleasant to listen to peoples' comments on Jang Ilsoon in restaurants. Despite this, he views Jang's change as his determination to take the middle way and to maintain it like Haewol (Hwang D. 2014). As Jang advised student activists who participated in democracy movement in the 1980s:

If you want to change others, you should respect them. When you remember this, others can change. If you look down on them and feel hostile to them, they might come on strong. If changing them is more important than removing them, you had not better see difference as hostile relations. (Jang I. as cited in Choi S. 2004, 156)

After 1977, Jang Ilsoon believed that it would be meaningless for the existing paradigm of the movement if they persisted on the basis of conflict and hostility

because he conceived an idea that it needed resistance at a different level (Kim Y. 2014). And he found its ideological foundation in Haewol's thought. For Haewol, the human mind is *hanul* (HWSB 4.8). Jang observes that Haewol's resistance starts and ends in the human mind. Hence, he concludes that his resistance should also be realised as 'duty in [the ordinary] life' (HWSB 7,11; 8.1; 9.2; 10.7; Jang I. 1993 as cited in RMG 2004, 124).

A revolution is not striking but stroking, I think. Originally, all things are great. Respect for one clump of grass does not mean it can disappear when you meet someone you do not like. Someone with [a] wrong idea should be respected like one clump of grass. By nature, all things are great. (Jang I. 2009, 150)

For Jang, the essence of resistance implies the change of perception of reality and all things beyond humanism. Jang also stated that fundamental resistance was vitally linked to practice 'to live earnestly and to help others to do in the same way' (Jang I. 2009, 87-88).

### 3.3.3. The Possibility of Social Spirituality

As for the life and thought of Haewol and Jang Ilsoon, two fundamental shared features can be found: resistance, from a different point of view as noted above, and spirituality. In addition, as Park Maengsu (2014) argues, their openness to the world and subjectivity in change, which are shared in their thoughts, are closely related to the tendency to thoroughly read social phenomena and to actively engage in social reform. This implies that Jang Ilsoon's thought can be interpreted as social spirituality rather than stale philosophy (BMP 47:41). In this regard, this part examines what aspects of Haewol's radical anthropology can be found in Jang

Ilsoon's thought by analysing his lectures, interviews, writing, and personal accounts, in order to construct his social thought, or social spirituality in certain ways.

Humans are spiritual and their nature originates from the divine nature of *hanul* (HWSB 37.8). This essence of *Donghak* anthropology is linked to the ontological implications of *sicheonju*. It was emphasised that humanity is spiritual as early *Donghak* explained the immanence of *hanul*. *Donghak* illustrated *hanul* with conventional metaphors as *Donghak* sought to eradicate its mystical and magical dimensions. In that process, its unique religiosity emerged, which focused on human spirituality rather than the personal and transcendental nature of *hanul*.

The anthropology of early *Donghak*, which highlights divinity and spirituality in the human mind, views humans as another form of *hanul* rather than objectifying humanity. Thus, in *Donghak*, an ideal society means a universal, cosmic and organic society, which consists of the cooperation among homogeneous beings and solidarity among disparate beings (Oh M. 1996, 263). *Donghak* philosophy conceives of humanity as identical to the whole universe, not as a part of it. This means that humans share the same nature with all things in the world. In other words, humans belong in the interrelationship, in which humans and all things share the identical nature. Thus, humans are described as spiritual beings that share the divine nature with all things and live with the omnipresent spiritual energy. In his analysis of *Donghak* anthropology, Yun Nobin, a Hegelian philosopher, points out (2003) that God lives in the human mind and humanity lives in God. He identifies this divine-human relationship as real friendship and concludes that this radical conception in *Donghak* anthropology raised awareness about the dignity of humanity in modern Korean society (Yun N. [1974] 2003, 360-362). In essence, the interrelationship between *hanul* and humanity is a central tenet of *Donghak* anthropology. As

previously mentioned, Haewol maintains that *hanul* exists in the human mind, thus the human mind is *hanul* (HWSB 4.8). The spiritual or divine nature of *hanul* makes humans spiritual. Thus, what is important to attain salvation at a human level is cultivate the spiritual, in other words one's mind in which *hanul* dwells (HWSB 8.11; 9). In this vein, Jang Ilsoon ironically states that humans are wicked, thus the fundamental solution to all social problems is to overcome the world of phenomenon that separates I from thou, and to admit the spiritual nature of humanity and the divine nature of all things (Jang I. 2009, 32; 76; 92-97).

Life, it cannot be seen nor touched nor smelled, but it really exists. By its favour all things can live. Do you think why Confucianism was defeated in China? It is because spirituality was missing. Confucius did not recognise what could not be seen. (Jang I. 2009, 209)

For Jang Ilsoon, keeping our focus on the unseen denotes respecting the divine nature that is immanent in both the human mind and all things. Humans are beings who embrace the unseen life immanent in all things and correlate significantly with them. He identifies this as wholeness of human existence (Jang I. 2009, 209). The origin of life is one, thus a single entity and the whole are also one. This idea might lead to the soteriological conclusion of *Donghak* anthropology in which *gaebyeok* (cosmic salvation) can be initiated from individual enlightenment. Jang Ilsoon, who had devoted his life to the farmers' movement and social movements, decided to change the way of his movement in 1977 at the height of Park Chung Hee's developmental dictatorship. Under Park's totalitarian dictatorship, Marxist inclined farmers' movements and radical social movements gradually lost their practical validity. Jang Ilsoon recognised that the direction of existing movements and their mechanisms needed to change fundamentally on the grounds of his reflection on humanity. Overall, he did not aim to form ideological discussion or to reform society

through political empowerment. Rather, his change was predicated upon the affirmation of the individual and social salvation through spirituality inherent in the human mind. As was seen before, his ideas were founded on *Donghak*'s understanding of human dignity. Under the influence of Neo-Confucianism, traditional Korean society tended to identify the family in terms of its rigid caste system, thus human dignity was differentiated by each social caste. Indeed, human dignity was a given value if an individual was accepted as a member of society. However, since its inception, *Seohak* reiterated that humanity was endowed with a unique position among other creatures due to the belief that humans were created in the image of God. For this reason, the dignity of human existence was valid in the mystical relations with the transcendent God. However, *Donghak* reinterpreted this on the basis of Confucian understanding. According to the concept of *sicheonju*, human dignity was not a value given within the community but the essence of human beings naturally given in their organic relationship with all things, which is based on the nature of *hanul*. In this sense, human dignity is based on the human-divine relationship, in *Donghak* terms *sicheonju*. In an oppressive and chaotic era, Jang Ilsoon asked how the dignity of humanity could be retained and he found the answer through Haewol's ideas. For Haewol, *sicheonju* is explained as human religiosity and *yangcheonju* is practical spirituality that may explain the way in which this value is realised in actuality.

Those who raise *hanul* can serve and respect *hanul*. *Hanul* is in my mind as its life is in a seed. As if you plant seeds and grow them, your mind raises *hanul* through the Way. (HWSB 25)

For Haewol, *hanul* is identical to the human mind, thus raising *hanul* involves cultivating the human mind (HWSB 4). If that is the case, human efforts to realise the

divine nature in the human mind and to follow it depend on ethical, moral and further spiritual practice in ordinary life. For example, he criticised the prevalent dualistic thinking of subject and object in social movements in the 1980s. In this vein, Jang Ilsoon developed Suun's *sicheonju* and Haewol's *yangcheonju*, two pillars of relational anthropology in *Donghak*, into *mosim* and *salim* in pure Korean words. In conclusion, Haewol's practical spirituality seemed to lead Jang Ilsoon to initiate his social spirituality, through which he implemented his new idea in the community from a social perspective.

#### 3.4. Haewol's Influence in Jang's Last Years

Human nature is destroyed. Community becomes disintegrated. The human mind is ripped. People have blind faith in money, materialism and technology. Our world is devastated: ecological degradation, environmental destruction etc. This may originate from materialist industrialisation and industrialised society. Without a fundamental shift, we could not imagine our promising future. In my opinion, Mr Jang had observed that an alternative civilisation was important to deal with today's problems and limitations of industrial civilisation. (Park J. n.d. cited in RMG 2004, 176)

It is often assumed that Jang Ilsoon is a philosopher of life or an activist of the life movement. As discussed above, his idea of life is closely related to Haewol's one. However, like Haewol, his idea of life was not philosophical nor discursive, as his disciples tend to interpret. Rather, it is simply close to the philosophy of the ordinary. In this present chapter, I have dealt with the characteristics of Haewol's philosophy and its influence on Jang Ilsoon. Here I mainly look at the way in which Haewol's idea is linked to Jang's ideological shift in his later years. Park Maengsoo (2014), a *Donghak* scholar and Cheondogyo priest, concludes that Jang Ilsoon is Haewol. Hwang Dogeun (2014) also states that Jang became an entirely different person in the

late 1980s and Jang himself wanted to be like Haewol. Further, Kim Jiha insists that Jang was ‘reborn’ through Haewol’s philosophy (Kim J. 2000 cited in RMG 2004, 189). Like this, Jang lived as a devout Catholic communicant throughout his life but in his later years he might have wanted to follow Haewol more than Jesus.

Jang was known to have some knowledge of *Donghak* after the liberation period (Jang I. 2009, 167). However, according to Jang Dongcheon, his father willingly expressed his interest in *Donghak*, especially Haewol, in the late 1980s (Jang D. 2014). In respect of Haewol, Jang Ilsoon showed great interest in Haewol’s teachings of *bap* (a bowl of rice) (Jang D. 2014; cf. 3.2.2). He once told in an interview: ‘Our Catholic Church believes in bread, doesn’t it? Because Jesus called himself bread. In other words, he is *bap*’ (Jang I. 2009, 138). Despite Jang having lived as a devout Catholic, in his last years Haewol’s teachings seemed familiar to him. Without religious tension, diverse religious ideas began to harmonise within his thinking. For example, Jang could exceed the hidden influence of Confucianism that was deeply rooted in his life, as some implications of Haewol’s thought sank in (Kim J. 2000 cited in RMG 2004, 190). In 1940, Jang’s family had converted to Catholicism, but his grandfather kept practising ancestral worship (Jang I. 2009, 145). Although the Vatican partly allowed ancestral worship in 1939 in relation to Shinto shrine worship under Japanese colonial rule, for his family, Confucian tradition and Catholic faith were in a different cultural category. In reality, he used honorifics to his wife and they bowed to each other when his son’s friends came home. His practice and understanding of Confucian *gyeong* (respect) were to be revisited after he discovered Haewol’s *samgyeong* (cf. 3.2). Like this, his thinking could broaden and be freed by crossing religious boundaries.

Now turning back to the idea of *bap*, both the sacramental significance of bread in Communion and the ritual significance of *bap* in ancestral worship are to show the extraordinary mystery in the ordinary. However, Jang Ilsoon focused not only on this ritualistic meaning of *bap* but also on the harsh realities of everyday life and the harmonising and relational nature of all things, which can be found even in a bowl of rice.

Once Haewol said like this. There is the universe in a bowl of rice. Knowing a bowl of rice is knowing all. It is marvellous to say that. With it, the mass protests could happen [in 1919]. Christianity? No. With *Donghak*, those could happen. Haewol also said that you were going to have it [...] You can receive a bowl of rice and receive the universe. All things in the universe are needed to make a grain of rice. Only with air or water, could a grain of rice be made. A grain of rice is the universe and a bowl of rice is also the universe. That is amazing. (Jang I. 1990, 395).

He described a bowl of rice as a universal encounter (Jang I. 2009, 66). This could mean that we can have a bowl of rice because heaven, land and all things work concertedly. He had already learnt from the way in which his grandfather treated neighbours and peasant farmers. Similarly, he also realised how harsh *minjung*'s life was while his was engaged in the farmers' movement. Within the Church, he received his bread in Communion with *minjung* and was assured that Christ stayed in their harsh realities.

However, the Church began to build a wall against *minjung* again since the mid-1980s. The self-segregated Church began to turn a blind eye to the social meaning of Paschal mystery and Christ's salvation work, which was usually revealed in everyday life of the people of God (cf. 2.2.) Then, Haewol's teachings of *bap* broadened his ideological horizons. As he reflected the social movement in the past, the implications of *bap* sank in. A hundred years ago, it was revolutionary that all things were *hanul*. Also, in the late 1980s it was revolutionary in a different sense that

the subject and object of social reform were identical. For him, both that painful memory in May 1980 and the strain or breakdown in the democratic movement in 1987 could be overcome through this fairly radical socio-religious imagination that I and thou are identical in every respect on the basis of a bowl of rice. And like Haewol, he concluded that a significant but gradual change could initiate and complete the here and now in everyday life.

As noted before, Haewol's philosophy led Jang Ilsoon's thinking to move to the ordinary. But his idea of the ordinary is rather unsystematic and relatively illogical. In this sense, a literary scholar and one of his followers, Kim Jongcheol insists that his illogicality can be his philosophy (Hwang D. 2014). However, if his thought is conceived of as a philosophy of the everyday, it might mean that his ideas unconsciously emerged from his everyday life, sharing with people whom he met in the geographical space of Wonju. For this reason, Hwang Dogeun, his nephew-in-law, also suggested that Jang Ilsoon's thought might be a philosophy of life, the most significant feature of which is communion with people around him. In this sense, Jang sought to realise the relational nature of all beings, which is at the centre of the idea of *icheonsikcheon* (to make heaven eat heaven). Indeed, his thought was not developed in the library or an office. It usually took 20 minutes from Wonju town centre to his house, but in reality it always took over 2 hours when he came back home (Kim J. 2000 cited in RMG 2004, 185). When he met people on his way home, he asked after them. He shared his life with them. He put down roots there and faced everyday life. He did not propose a new idea nor maintain existing ideas, such as Catholicism or Haewol. Rather, he reflected them in an earnest way. After that, he actioned in his own way and inspired people whom he met in everyday life (Hwang D. 2014).

### 3.5. Conclusion

To those who have studied Jang Ilsoon and those who have known him, the question that I have posed in the beginning of this chapter can be a familiar one: in which ways does Haewol influence Jang Ilsoon? In his recent study on *Donghak*, Park Maengsu (2014, 33) states that it seems to him that Haewol and Jang Ilsoon are one man. The simple reason he cites is that they had ‘a warm affection for the grass roots and showed their great concern for them.’ Indeed, the way in which most of my interviewees described Jang Ilsoon can be considered in the same vein.

This chapter has aimed to analyse in detail the relationship between Haewol and Jang Ilsoon, which has been generally understood in broad or superficial terms, by focusing on their life events and tracing some essential features in their thoughts. Despite a hundred-year gap, it was unavoidable for both to face the incapable and even oppressive political power and the crushing despair of the people. For Haewol, these might be the rampant tyrannies of the Joseon dynasty, a clear moral failure of neo-Confucianism and a series of uprisings. For Jang Ilsoon, these might be the totalitarian regime of Park Chung Hee and his junta, the Japanese colonial rule, the Korean War and the ideology of development in the 1960s and 1970s. These experiences allowed their thoughts to flower in an ordinary context rather than the socio-political context. Although he was a commoner and read the world from the *mincho* perspective, Haewol told others not to resist the corrupt social structure or the aristocrat but the human mind and its tendency to neglect human nature, as he reiterated. Jang Ilsoon told others to shift the dualistic paradigm of social movements, although he stood against the unjustified authorities. In this sense, Jang’s movement that embraces I and thou and Haewol’s idea that humans are *hanul* are closely linked

in a practical way. As we have seen earlier, Jang Ilsoon started to reflect the direction of his movement in 1977. According to Dongcheon, his father became openly critical of existing activist groups; and in the ideological realm he was known to delve into Haewol from the 1980s. He also remembered his appreciation of his father's change in Jang Ilsoon's 1988 exhibition. To him, the calligraphy works of that exhibition seemed his father's 'great leap to overcome [his] own wall [past]' (Jang D. 2104). In every way, this suggests that Jang Ilsoon realised the limitation of social movements as Park's regime ended in 1979 and another authoritarian military junta emerged at the beginning of the 1980s. It was then he finally encountered Haewol, who became his light in the darkness.

As discussed in the present chapter, *Donghak*, particularly Haewol's philosophy, was considered as an important factor in Jang's life and thought in his last years, whereas Buddhism, which was also of interest to him in his last years, and its influence has been often ignored so far. In the next chapter, I will examine how Jang interacted with Buddhist teachings and discuss its significance to his thinking.

## Chapter 4

### *Seon* Buddhism in Jang Ilsoon

*Just make yourself master of every situation, and wherever you stand is the truth.*  
— Linji, *Discourses XII*

In the previous chapters, I have examined modern Catholic social thought and *Donghak*, focusing on Jang Ilsoon's relation to Haewol, in order to understand how Jang's thinking was shaped and to trace its development from a religious perspective. For Haewol, it may help us to read the way in which his thinking interacted with his times through socio-historical awareness and adaptation, and for Jang Ilsoon, it may help us to understand his life and thinking in general, through his unconscious assimilation or rapport with Haewol despite the temporal and spatial gap. In fact, it is a widely-held view among his friends and supporters that these two religious ideas need to be dealt with in order to illuminate Jang Ilsoon's thinking. Hence, it seems rather limited or even invalid to analyse his thinking from a Buddhist perspective, particularly *Seon*. The term *Seon* is a relatively new name for a dominant branch of East Asian Buddhism, commonly referred to as Zen. In fact, *Seon* is a Korean equivalent for Zen in Japanese and Zen itself is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese Character *Chan*. In this chapter, these three terms are used interchangeably in a broad sense. As for Jang's thought, few materials and records remain in relation to *Seon*. Despite this fact, the reason why I argue that *Seon* is significant to spell out his

thinking might be rather simple. Over the past decade there has been a general lack of research in the distinctive characteristics of *Seon* from a social dimension, some aspects of which might be found in his thinking, and may explain his ideological shift. My concern regarding the linkage between *Seon* and Jang emerged from the interview with his third son, Dongcheon:

[my father] seemed to read many Buddhist scriptures. Once he requested some books about Chan Buddhism in the Song while he was struggling against cancer. I do not think that he had an interest in Buddhism in general; *Seon* was his special interest. (Jang D. 2014)

Despite Dongcheon's account, many of the records on *Seon* in a specific era, such as Song dynasty cannot be found. Only a few *Seon* poems and episodes are shown in his lectures and calligraphic works. This raises a question why Jang Ilsoon took an interest in *Seon* during the last years of his life. Here it is worth noting that he had an interest in the distinctive features of *Seon* that differ from Buddhism in general (Jang D. 2014).

First of all, *Seon* is marked by the emphasis on the inner self-awakening, Buddha-nature in Buddhist terms, in a broad sense. In particular, assuming that Korean *Seon* originated from the southern school of Chinese Chan and patriarchal *Seon*, its doctrinal bases can be *tathāgatagarbha* (Buddha-nature) and *prajñāpāramitā* (perfection of transcendental wisdom) (Kim J. 2011, 78). It is possible, therefore, that *Seon* is intimately related to the concept of Buddha-nature, which could open up ontological and practical possibility. Indeed, it is tempting to say that *Seon* is practice-centred rather than text-centred, for it tends not to dwell on phenomena and doctrine. It also focuses on the ontological aspects of the concept of Buddha-nature and develops the method of practice from the concept. But there is no information that Jang Ilsoon practised *Seon* meditation. Hence, it could be argued that he paid more

attention to certain features of *Seon* that emerged in the socio-political environment of East Asian countries, such as China, Japan and Korea. In this regards, what he said in a conversation with one of his disciples has important implications.

Life can be neither touched, nor seen, nor smelt. But it definitely exists. All beings can live, thanks to it. Do you know why Confucianism lost its values in China? It is because there is no spirituality in it. Confucius did not admit 'the unseen'. Buddhism came to China and gave it, didn't it? But our time only counts on what we can see with our own eyes and what comes and goes. (Jang I. 2009, 209)

Jang Ilsoon points out the reason behind the historical failure of Confucianism in China, when commenting on social movements in Korean society in the 1990s. He claims that Confucianism had already lost its religious or philosophical hegemony in modern times, from a religious perspective aside from the political one, through socialism, because of the prolonged absence of spirituality. As noted above, he identifies spirituality as accepting the unseen. In this sense, the spiritual vacuum in Chinese society was filled with Buddhist ideas such as religious acceptance and social equality, as Confucianism had lost its religious values. It can thus be assumed that his concern for 'the unseen' may imply the conceptual expansion of Buddhist ontology based on the idea of Buddha-nature.

The objectives of this chapter are to shine new light on Jang's relations to *Seon* and to determine the way in which he internalised some of its characteristics. In dealing with this, I focus on the social implications of *Seon* attached to Buddha-nature and its social metaphor. This chapter begins by exploring the idea of Buddha-nature as the central tenet of *Seon* in East Asia.

#### 4.1. Buddha-nature: Pervasiveness of Ontological Possibility

Historically, the concept of Buddha-nature, which was transmitted from India to China with the Nirvana Sutra in the early fifth century, has played a significant role in East Asian Buddhist philosophies (Cole 2005, 197). Simply stated, the essence of Buddha-nature concept is that all living beings have Buddha-nature. From this perspective, East Asian Buddhism draws a controversial conclusion that both living beings (*yujeong*) and non-living things (*mujeong*) are able to become the Buddha. From the first phase of its development, generally elite and state-sponsored Chinese Buddhism was open to doctrinal and philosophical debates (Fujii 2015, 306-7). Indeed, the doctrinal foundation of the concept was laid on the basis of the Indian Buddhist concept of *tathāgatagarbha*. In terms of the history of Buddhist thought, the notion of *tathāgatagarbha* was known to serve as a bridge between exoteric and esoteric Buddhism. Meanwhile, to some extent, this idea might contain or mingle with opposing ideas in historical transition. Such a doctrinal development could be expressed through the internal dogmatic tension and the external social confrontation. Hence, in dealing with Buddha-nature idea, it is necessary to consider this adversarial nature in order to understand it. This section examines the concept of *tathāgathagarbha* in detail for a clearer understanding of the concept of Buddha-nature, for it is generally accepted that no conceptual distinction exists between the *tathāgatagarbha* and Buddha-nature in the context of East Asian Buddhism (Shimoda 2015, iii-iv).

#### 4.1.1. *Tathāgatagarbha* and Its Doctrinal Significance

It is generally accepted that the concept of *tathāgatagarbha* was firstly illustrated in the *Tathāgatagarbha* Sutra, although modern scholarship has challenged such an observation (cf. Zimmermann 2002; Cole 2005). The gist of this sutra can be revealed in nine different similes, which present all living beings as having the immutable and pure Buddha-nature. In the first simile, the *tathāgata* (one of ten Buddha names) is depicted as seating on the withered lotus. The lotus flower is one of the most common symbols in the sutras. Indeed, Shakyamuni Buddha compared himself to a lotus while explaining his identity. By using such an image, the simile shows that corrupt living beings possess the *tathāgata* just as the *tathāgata* on the withered lotus can exist. In this regard, it appears that these images and terms were purposefully incorporated into the first simile by the editors of the Sutra. The contrast between the *padmagarbha* of the withered lotus and the *tathāgatagarbha* of all living beings clarifies the meaning of the coinage of the term. In Sanskrit, the term *garbha* denotes seed, fetus, essence, matrix, and even temple sanctum, hence an interpretation influenced by a biological image was dominant. Meanwhile, in his recent analysis of the nine similes, Zimmermann doubts whether, in a conceptual sense, a rigorous reading of the Sutra supports traditional connotations of the *tathāgatagarbha* (Zimmermann 2002, 40-50). In addition, with regard to a particular context and practical atmosphere of the Sutra, the doctrinal motive of the concept was the edification of the devotees (Ibid., 75). In this respect, the religious conception that all living beings have the pristine and immutable nature of *tathāgata* became integrated with the existing ideas and, a new practical feature of Buddhism penetrated its doctrinal domain.

It has been often observed that the soteriologies of religions are grounded in what Jang Ilsoon calls ‘the dualistic root that causes loss of humanity’ (Jang I. 2009, 28). Buddhism also conceptualises the understanding of the world, such as *samsara* (the eternal cycle of rebirth) and *nirvana* (ultimate liberation), and *bodhisattva* (an enlightened one) and *sattva* (a living being), in a dualistic manner. Hence, from the Buddhist perspective, enlightenment as its soteriological goal is to propose an integrated viewpoint to dualistic worldview. Also, it is to bridge the ontological gap between *sattva* and *bodhisattva*, or living beings and Buddha, by realising and reinterpreting this idea. The concept of *tathāgatagarbha* does not oppose existing soteriological features of Buddhism. Rather, this idea tends to reassess the subject of soteriology and its *upaya* (expedient means). Indeed, when denying the ontological difference between Buddha and living beings, and focusing on the soteriological potentiality of Buddha-nature, Buddhist practice as *upaya* becomes irrelevant. Just as with the early phase of Chinese Buddhism, present-day scholars have criticised this doctrinal weakness. For this reason, the *tathāgatagarbha* concept places the Buddha at the centre of interpretation. Simply stated, the Buddha himself declares that all living beings have the nature of *tathāgata*. Although the *tathāgatagarbha* is an inherent feature of all living beings, it is difficult to say that it is revealed naturally in every living being.

As for the interpretation of the *tathāgatagarbha*, it assumes that the *tathāgata* exists in the triple realm of the cosmos in order to explain how the *tathāgatagarbha* is manifested. First, *tathāgata* in the Dharma realm proclaims that all living beings are identical to himself. *Dharmakaya* (one of the threefold bodies of Buddha) of *tathāgata* enters into *samsara* and becomes the *tathāgatagarbha*. Simultaneously, all living beings can assimilate into *tathāgata* by responding to its appeal and in turn they

acquire the *tathāgatagarbha*. In this respect, *Dharmakaya* is conceived of as *tathāgata* who penetrates into all living beings. *Tathāgata* as *Dharmakaya* is emblematic of the future that is realised in all living beings. In the light of this interpretation, it might be understood that living beings are the potentiality of the *tathāgata*. *Tathāgata* accepts the change from actuality to potentiality in order to realise the potentiality of all living beings. Here an ambiguity of the *tathāgatagarbha* idea and its doctrinal contradiction can be found. Given that the Buddha exists as actuality, all living beings have a sole fixed object. From the practical aspect, many critics claim that the concept consequently affirms the realities and conceals discrimination. Yet, in reality, it is worth noting that the idea embraces the possibility of change at all levels. It is vital to note that the awakening or transformation of human nature is hinged on the reality that all living beings have the potentiality to proceed and become the Buddha. In order to reveal the *tathāgatagarbha* as the essence of *tathāgata*, for all living beings, it must be preceded by practical willingness to be liberated from defilement. This liberation can be realised through various *upaya* of practice and of *bodhicitta* (aspiration for living beings' enlightenment). Likewise, the idea can be an alternative to the current teleological and mechanistic worldview in both religious and social dimensions.

#### 4.1.2. Conceptual Transformation of Buddha-nature in East Asia

As Buddha-nature doctrine was introduced to China with the Nirvana Sutra in the early fifth century, existing Chinese Buddhism, having focused mostly on the propagation and the translation of the religious texts, reached a doctrinal crossroads. In the initial stage of Chinese Buddhism, it borrowed similar existing concepts and

philosophies and it sought to apply analogical understanding to the new ideas in order to assimilate the original ones. As with the notion of Buddha-nature, it seems reasonable to assume that the analogy of existing religious notions was applied in its conception. Such an attitude of Chinese Buddhism is understood to foster the realistic trend of Buddhist doctrine (Kim J. 2015, 85-97). Early Chinese Buddhism had a tendency towards a negative, rigoristic understanding of the world. However, it could explain and develop its doctrine to the masses through the analogical understanding of traditional ideas. As a result, the doctrine of Buddha-nature and its practical aspects were enhanced.

In dealing with the idea of Buddha-nature, much of the research up to now has preferred the term *tathāgatagarbha* because believing it to be a more comprehensive and complete idea than Buddha-nature. Those who favoured this argument have criticised the notion of Buddha-nature as severely limited to a specific sphere of space and time or a particular ideological trend (Matsumoto 2015). Indeed, this analysis seems to follow the traditional line of contention that there is a lack of ideological creativity and authenticity in East Asian Buddhism by comparison with Indian Buddhism (Conze 1962). However, in the history of East Asian Buddhist thought, it should be pointed out that the occurrence of the doctrine of Buddha-nature (*Bulseong*) was bound up with the contextualisation of Chinese Buddhism. It can thus be said that there exists a philosophical background to this doctrine, in particular Confucian homogeneity shared in the East Asian culture. Literally, the term *Bulseong* means the nature (*seong*) of the Buddha (*Bul*), in other words, Chinese Buddhism adopted the term *seong* to translate the term *garbha* of the *tathāgatagarbha*. Therefore, it is not by chance that the Buddha-nature concept should be interpreted on the grounds of Confucian understanding of human nature (Kim Y. 2006, 283). In terms of Confucian

philosophy, *seong*, which is also called *bonyeonjiseong*, refers to inherent human nature. For Confucius, while all human beings have this equal and inherent nature, but they have become apart from human nature. Nonetheless, Confucian philosophy affirms that one can acquire human nature by learning and practising benevolence. In a nutshell, it is quite clear that the conception of Buddha-nature implicitly shares the Confucian philosophy from its coinage of the *Bulseong*. According to Confucius, human beings have *seong* but habits leads them to different lives (Analects 17.2). This basic understanding of *seong* is grounded in the notion that it is an inherent quality granted by Heaven, and human nature is universal and value neutral but fatalistic (Kang S. 2012, 435-436). Moreover, the notion of *seong* implies that it distinguishes human beings from nonhuman beings (Zhang 2002, 367-8) but, in developing the idea of Buddha-nature, Chinese Buddhism modified this Confucian viewpoint. If Buddha-nature is such a discriminatory quality, it could serve as a measure of inequality in terms of the whole world. The doctrine supported the idea that both living beings and non-living things have Buddha-nature, thus it was understood to embrace the value of equality. In reality, it was regarded as an ideological revolution, thus it impacted the Chinese society, in which Confucianism had held the socio-religious hegemony for hundreds of years. In addition, the doctrine became the main driver of the proliferation of Buddhist thought as the masses were dissatisfied with elite Buddhism.

Given that Buddha-nature doctrine is deeply related to the Confucian understanding of human nature, it is necessary to consider the influences of Confucian moral philosophy, focusing on the enhancement of human nature. First, Confucian philosophy conceives of Heaven as the roots of morals, thus morality is given to humanity by Heaven. Confucius explains that morality is founded on *in* (benevolence). Likewise, *in* can be revealed by the realisation of human nature, and

the manifestation of Buddha-nature can be the Buddhist equivalent to the realisation. For Confucius, self-consciousness of human nature can be gained by acquired efforts such as learning, practice and guidance. Mencius observes that human beings possess natural inner possibilities, concluding that human nature can be revealed through praxis. This universal approach to humanity and confidence in morality can also be seen in the idea of Buddha-nature. Just as Confucian understanding of *seong* developed on the practical not the conceptual dimension, Chinese Buddhism seemed to question why it exists rather than how Buddha-nature exists.

Secondly, in Confucian philosophy, *seong* can be revealed by *in*, of which its essence is *hyo* (filial piety). *Hyo* is also the moral praxis of *seong*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the basic tenet of *hyo* is to respect parents as Zhu Xi defines. Here I intend to focus more closely on the relational implications of *hyo*. Basically, *hyo* refers to a parent-child relationship and its premise is to respect oneself. Further, this respect can be extended to a sovereign-subject relationship in the frame of absolute monarchy. In essence, the significance of *hyo* in East Asia is its extensibility in terms of communal values. When *in* can be characterised as social restoration of human nature, its essence is centered on a moral basis. It can establish and stabilise every dimension of social relationship. Likewise, the relational concept of *hyo* becomes the ethical foundation of social structure. In Confucian philosophy, human decency begins with a broader conception of relations. In the light of this observation, the manifestation of Buddha-nature seems to be conceived of as a revelation of *maitrikaruna*, the true nature of Buddha, at the level of both individual and society.

Another relevant point that caused the transformation of Buddha-nature doctrine is this-worldly tradition embedded in existing ideas in Chinese society. The origins of this ideological trend went back to the *I Ching* (Book of Changes) in the

twelfth century BCE. According to the *I Ching*, neither absolute nor constant substance exists, and the balance of yin and yang makes the world changeable. From the human perspective, it acknowledged infinite possibilities, thus it gave philosophical and emotional grounds for applying Buddha-nature to Chinese society. Moreover, this thinking developed into the idea of valuing the here and now, as later *Seon* Buddhism identified it as *pyeongsangsimsido*, meaning that the ordinary mind is enlightenment (Kim J. 2015, 13-18). Therefore, it can be said that Buddha-nature doctrine created the image of East Asian Buddhism as human Buddhism, focusing on historicity.

In this regard, the Confucian ideas embedded in the doctrine could provide useful clues to illuminate various dimensions of *Bulseong*. As noted before, East Asian Buddhist philosophy inherits some practical aspects from the Confucian account. Thus, in terms of practice, traditional criticism of Buddha-nature could be revisited by the Confucian theory of practice. In historical terms, Buddha-nature doctrine underwent a domestication and inculturation in Korea and Japan after the transmission of Chinese Buddhism. Because there existed particular historical and social needs and circumstances in Korean and the Japanese society. For these reasons, considering the context of East Asia is of great importance in the process of occurrence and transformation. Most obviously, *tathāgatagarbha* was a mere developing concept in the East Asian context and the progress of doctrinal adaption is embedded in the notion of *Bulseong*.

Pertinently, as Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century, Buddhist doctrine, particularly the Buddha-nature concept, underwent a transformation and contextualisation through a long-running doctrinal debate. In turn, the concept of the enlightenment of plants occurred as a result of adaptation to

Japanese culture. While this concept was widely accepted and developed in the Tendai School of Japanese Buddhism in the Heian era, it originated from the Tiantai School of Chinese Buddhism. In brief, Jizang, monk and scholar of the Sanlun School of Chinese Buddhism, maintained the notion in his Treatise on the Mystery of the Mahayana on the grounds of the doctrine of consciousness-only, of which the main contention is that all things are the manifestation of the human mind. For him, there is no relative discrimination between dependent recompense and right retribution due to the fact that all phenomena are the shadow of the human mind. Thus, all living beings and the universe itself are conceived of as perfect enlightenment and immeasurable *Samadhi* (state of concentration). The concept is also based on the idea of the Avatamsaka Sutra that the triple realm is only the manifestation of mind (Sueki 2005, 161-3). It is worth noting that the sixth patriarch of the Tiantai school, Zhanran's controversial teachings represented the considerable influence on the enlightenment of plants and trees of Japanese Buddhism later. He asserted that Buddha-nature can be found in non-living things and his assertion is at variance with existing ones. For him, not only living beings but also non-living things are linked with Buddha-nature under direct and indirect conditions. Also, he argued that Buddha-nature is immanent in the myriad forms in the universe as the Dharma realm is filled with the Dharmakaya. This is based on the idea that Buddha-nature is omnipresent as is the Truth (Choi D. 2006). Such an idea derived from the Tiantai School's teachings was introduced to Japanese Buddhism and it developed in the Japanese cultural sphere, as a major tenet of the Tendai School by early Tendai thinkers such as Annen and Ryogen in the Heian period. Later, Japanese Buddhism in general and secular literature were under the influence of this idea.

In Japanese Buddhism, the idea of enlightenment of plants and trees led to a radical notion; a single plant or a tree itself becomes enlightened. What decisively marks off this idea from the traditional one is that each individual being in the phenomenal world attains enlightenment as it is. According to Ryogen, plants and trees obtains the phases of form (origin, stasis, decay, extinction) and these states are equated with a great inspirit to attain enlightenment, practice, supreme enlightenment, and nirvana respectively (Sueki 2005, 158-165). This resulted in extreme affirmation of the phenomenal world as the realm of Dharma. Hence, from the Buddhist perspective it is notable that, if the momentary and inexistent world is affirmed, neither practice nor virtuous works is relevant in religious terms, and structural problems can be tolerated in social terms. Indeed, the Tendai School was dominated by the intellectual elite, thus it could be interpreted and applied to the realities for political purposes. Nonetheless, the idea of enlightenment of plants and trees implies that intrinsic value of all living beings and non-living things is considered important.

The main goal of the current part was to examine the conceptual and doctrinal significance of Buddha-nature, commonly called Buddha's *maeumjari* in Korean Buddhism, literally meaning the nature of the mind. The motive for such an expression bears a likeness to the ethical or moral intention of Chinese Buddhism, which tried to translate the term a thousand and five hundred years ago. East Asian Buddhism has embraced the idea that human beings attain Buddhahood and it has adapted the concept of Buddha-nature as inherent human nature through doctrinal interactions with Confucian philosophy. As noted above, Buddha-nature has a strong doctrinal association with human nature in Confucian terms, and its manifestation of is equivalent to the development or restoration of human nature in Confucian terms. In essence, as Confucian philosophy affirms, the restoration of human nature is

realised through *in*, of which the essence is a relational concept, *hyo*, and the social dimension of this concept is horizontal or reciprocal rather than vertical. Again, the idea of Buddha-nature also presents the value of ontological equality. All things in the universe have Buddha-nature and the complete image of Buddha as they are. This contentious, idealistic and rather radical notion might deny the ideological and perpetual distinction in the actualities. In the light of Buddha-nature doctrine, for both living beings and non-living things, their reason for existence is equally to strive for attaining the Buddhahood. In this sense, Buddha-nature doctrine suggests that all beings have intrinsic rather than instrumental value. This is the reason why we accept non-human beings, or even non-living things, as the Dharma brothers and sisters metaphorically and practically. Thus, the interpretation of Buddha-nature can be enhanced at the different level. If all beings share the equal inherent value, as Buddha-nature doctrine suggests, it is worth noting in social terms that individuals share universal value. In the light of this analysis, the concise conclusion to be drawn here is that the existing dominant notion postulating confrontation among all beings can be reassessed on the grounds of the idea that all beings could be the potential forms of the Buddha. The next section briefly concerns Korean *Seon* in general and *Seon* master Hyujeong's understanding of *Seon* in the mid-Joseon period, in order to grasp the social significance of *Seon*.

## 4.2. *Seon* as Social Spirituality

### 4.2.1. An Overview of Korean *Seon*

As previously mentioned, the word *Seon* is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese Chan. It is commonly assumed that the word is the rendered form of the Sanskrit word *dhyana* or the Pali *jhana*, meaning meditation or spiritual concentration (Faure 1997, 1). With respect to Chan, there is the view that the term is the truncated translation of *chanding* (*Seonjeong* in Korean). Since the word Chan also conveyed the meaning of abdication or heaven worship in ancient China, it is possibly accepted that the word *chanding* was coined in order to clarify the meaning. Since this is a combination of Chan and *ding*, meaning remaining stable, calm and stationary, so that there have been religiously stereotyped images of Chan as public apathy, religious seclusion and insularity. Despite this, *Seon* is believed to be derived from the term for a purely practical basis and its development involves a strong practical tendency.

In terms of its history, *dhyana* (meditation) of India was believed to be passed on to China by Bodhidharma in the sixth century CE. Although there has been a consensus on the transmission of Chan, however it does not suggest that Chinese Chan developed merely from Bodhidharma and his legacy. Rather, it is highly probable that Chinese Chan had developed as a special practice and was domesticated in the context of Sinitic pluralism until the Song dynasty (Hershock 2005, 67). Between the seventh and eighth century two Chan schools were founded by the fifth patriarch Hongren's two major disciples: Shenhui and Huineng. On the one hand those who followed Shenhui practised Chan on the basis of the Buddha-nature concept in the Lankavatara Sutra, but on the other, those who followed Huineng emphasised the concept of *sunyata* (emptiness) from the Diamond Sutra.

Huineng's disciples, the so-called Southern Chan School, inclined to the doctrines of non-dependence on words (*bulipmunja*), special transmission outside the scriptures (*gyooebyeoljeon*), direct pointing to the mind (*jikjiinsim*), and identifying the human nature and becoming Buddha (*gyeonseongseongbul*). This conviction could imply the illogical tendency of Chan, which never attaches importance to letters and scriptures in order to attain enlightenment. In terms of Chan, one is able to be enlightened through one's realisation that the original nature is Buddha-nature. Indeed, Huineng's followers maintained that one can realise Buddha-nature merely through sitting meditation not through long term practice and scriptures. Further, they asserted that ordinary and everyday behaviours can be Buddha's even if one does not practise meditation. On the other hand, for Shenhui's successors within the Northern School, their practice was based on Mahayana metaphysics and relevant doctrines, thus its aim was to cleanse one's originally pure spiritual nature from all defilements (Dumoulin 1988, 109). Moreover, the Northern School stressed how Chan masters acted and what they said. Later these were collected and systematised, and used as the key method of Chan practice. *Gongan* means a dialogue between the master and student, but it is not an intellectual, explanatory or instructive dialogue (Faure 1993, 359-363).

There can be little doubt that Korean Buddhism, which is generally known as *Ganhwa-Seon*, is deeply rooted in this Chinese homegrown Chan tradition (*Josa-Seon*). As with *ganwha*, the Chinese word *gan* means to see and read without a small misunderstanding by illuminating the core of Buddha-nature. In other words, it is a state of unification of knowledge and praxis, philosophy and life, mind and practice. In *Josa-Seon*, it applies to one who overcomes the relative contraposition, such as wise and foolish, confused and composed, and theory and praxis. It thus stands for a

master, whose nature is restored to its original state, and is referred to as a *Seon* master. The central tenet of *Josa-Seon* is known as *jongji* and a method of enhancing *jongji* is *jongpung* (style of sect). The *jongji* of *Josa-Seon* includes *bulsaseonbulsaaak*, *jeuksimjeukbul*, *bisimbibul*, *pyeongsangsimtido*, *salbulsaljo*, and *muwijinin*. First, *bulsaseonbulsaaak* is from the sixth patriarch Huineng, meaning cessation of the both good and evil thought, that is, to go back to human nature in which there is no discrimination of good and evil. Second, *jeuksimjeukbul* is one of the most popular phrases in *Seon*, which means the mind is the Buddha. This implies that it is feasible for every human being to be the Buddha due to the conviction that there is Buddha-nature in the human mind. As one's original mind is Buddha-nature, one who brings the mind back becomes the Buddha. Third, *Bisimbibul* literally means neither mind nor the Buddha. The very mind which is the Buddha is neither mind nor the Buddha, yet apart from the mind there is no Buddha, and apart from the Buddha, there is no mind. The reverse of the mind is the Buddha. Mazu warned not to be attached to either the mind or the Buddha. Fourth, *pyeongsangsimtido* literally means that the ordinary mind is the way. This is the subject of the dialogue that took place between Zhaozhou and Nanquan. The Way, enlightenment, Nirvana, and the Buddha mind are none other than the everyday mind that is free of attachment, craving, and discrimination; the Buddha mind is not considered to be special. Fifth, Linji said *salbulsaljo*, which means to kill the Buddha and a patriarch on the spot. It can be understood as a stern warning not to find the Buddha and a patriarch outside of the human mind. Lastly, *muwijinin* is also from the Record of Linji, which is commonly regarded as the core of *Seon*. In the Record, Linji replies to the question what the true man without rank is, '*muwijinin* what kind of dried piece of dung is he!' (Linji as cited in Kirchner 2009, 4).

It is a widely held view that *Seon* was brought to Korea by the monk Beopnang during the period of the Unified Silla dynasty (668-935) in the mid seventh century. He learnt from Daoxin, the fourth patriarch of Chinese Chan and returned from Tang. Sinhaeng, one of Beopnang's disciples, entered Tang and studied with Shenhui's successors. He returned in 831CE and introduced the teachings of the northern Chan School. However, the main strands of Buddhism in Unified Silla were scholastic and aristocratic. Hence, the northern Chan was not much popularised. At that time, the scholastic schools (*gyojong*) tended to ignore social problems and immerse themselves in exegesis of Buddhist scriptures as the schools became conservative in every sense. Further, the predominance of this form of Buddhism acted as a ruling ideology to strengthen royal authority under the aegis of the court and the aristocracy. In the late Silla, as a political conflict between the court and the nobility was growing, the locus of political power slowly moved from the capital to the provinces. Some of the local gentry, who lost the power struggle, went to China to find a new opportunity, and there were monks among them. For monks, there was a realistic reason to study in China because the Dharma lineage was of great importance. Indeed, the majority of illustrious *Seon* masters who initiated the *Seon* School in the late Silla studied in China where Chan sects were already established. Doui, the founder of Korean *Seon*, also studied the teachings of the Southern School of Chan. He returned in 821CE and disseminated the teachings of the Southern School. *Seon* achieved widespread popularity among the masses and the local gentry as radical aspects of *Seon* and individualistic practice of meditation were in concert with social change. As a result, nine separate mountain temples were established outside the capital and these are known as *gusanSeonmun* (Nine Mountain School of *Seon*). After the inception of *Seon*, the conflict between the scholastic schools and the

*Seon* schools was brought to the surface. *Seon* emphasised individual practice, meanwhile the doctrinal strengthened the solidarity and focused on studying *gyo* (Buddhist doctrine). This issue is controversial but, in terms of Korean Buddhism, the relationship between *Seon* and *gyo* is mutually exclusive but inseparable. Historically, this tendency has settled in Korean Buddhism since *Seon* was revived in the twelfth century. It is probable that the teachings of *Seon*, aiming at the systematisation of the process of enlightenment, accept positive but somewhat enforced rapprochement by the dynamics of society at large.

However, in the period of Goryeo (918-1392), state-sponsored Korean Buddhism became rapidly secularised. As the court and the nobility were engaged in the management of temples, Buddhism acquired power and wealth ever held. Also, through a higher state of monastic examination elite priests began to involve themselves in national politics. Accordingly, Buddhism, which had become closer to the higher echelons of society in the early Goryeo, was secularised and corrupt in the pursuit of power and wealth. In the twelfth century, the military regime came to power and removed the nobility and the court. Meanwhile, the scholastic schools closely tied to the authorities were targeted. Under the military regime the locus of religious power moved to *Seon*.

On the other hand, the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910), whose ruling ideology was Neo-Confucianism, did not approve Buddhism officially, whereas the royal court's attitudes towards the religion were ambivalent. Under the continuing policy of persecution, discussion or development of Buddhist doctrines was limited and large holdings of land were confiscated. Most urban monasteries were disestablished, thus Buddhist monks were banished to the mountains and became insular. It is no exaggeration that this led to the discontinuity of the lineage of *Seon* in Korean

Buddhism. However, such repression proved to be somewhat significant to Korean *Seon* in two respects: 1) the secluded monasteries became centres for the communal flourishing of *Seon* practice, and 2) *Seon* could develop strong bonds with *minjung* (the common people). Indeed, *Seon* was considered as the victim of religious persecution in the Joseon dynasty, whereas the long-time religious hegemony belonged to state-sponsored Buddhism during the period of Unified Shilla and Goryeo. Moreover, its scholastic and aristocratic characteristic made Buddhism an elite religion, which was disconnected from the religiosity of *minjung*. However, Buddhism rapidly lost socio-political and spiritual hegemony after the inception of the Joseon dynasty.

#### 4.2.2. *Seon* Master Hyujeong: Practical Meaning of Enlightenment

The significance of *Seon* in Korean Buddhism cannot be denied. Although still somewhat controversial, *hogukbulgyo* (Patriotic Buddhism) is also considered as another important tradition. It is a widely held view that Hyujeong (1520-1604) was both a prominent *Seon* master and a leader of Patriotic Buddhism in the Joseon period. Here I seek to reassess this traditional view that he was a worldly elite monk who recruited and led a Buddhist army for three years during the Japanese invasion (1592-1598) in a bid to reverse a hostile policy on Buddhism. Indeed, he had been a Buddhist monk for over sixty years, since he joined the Sangha at the age of twenty. (Kim S. 2012, 181-182). But in some way Hyujeong as a practitioner proposed the way in which *Seon*, or enlightenment in a broad term, responded to the realities and sufferings of *sattvas* in the vortex of war. Thus, according to Jang Ilsoon (2009, 209), this could be that the reason behind how Hyujeong behaved or what he believed was

spiritual. In his thinking and behaviour, Hyujeong showed that enlightenment was in vain. without concerning for the unseen, who had been ignored and treated differently throughout the history of Korea,

Little is known about Hyujeong's childhood years. He was born in Anju to the east of Pyeongyang. His lay surname was Choi. He lost his parents before age ten and Lee Sajeung, the governor of Anju, looked after him. At the age of twelve, Hyujeong started *Seongkyunkwan*, the highest national educational institution with the help of Lee. But he did not seem to be interested in studying Confucianism. He failed in the state examination once and he decided to leave the institution. Shortly after he left, he went sightseeing to Mount Jiri and encountered Buddhism. In the following three years, he decided to join the Sangha. It is unknown why he chose a chaotic and uncertain future and left all behind. He is believed to have immersed himself in *Seon* practice. At the time, for a while Buddhism was restored under the auspices of the royal family. During a regency period of the mid-fifteenth century, Queen Munjeong (1501-1565), the mother of King Myeongjong (1545-1567) brought back a state monastic examination, which had been discarded for half a century, in order to raise a Buddhist elite for retaining political power. Hyujeong passed the state examination and was appointed as the highest rank of Buddhism. But he resigned from his eminent position and was known to have devoted himself to practice again, travelling around the country. Meanwhile, Queen Munjeong died in 1565 and again, Buddhism was ruthlessly suppressed both ideologically and economically in order to subdue it (cf. Kim P. 2013, 18-33). Ironically, during the period of Buddhist revival, the realities of *minjung* was devastated owing to continuing corruption and exploitation. Whether or not Hyujeong read the sign of the times, he regretted that he had accepted a role as a public official so that he went back to a mere Buddhist monk. It seems probable that

the reality led him to reflect on the socio-historical meaning of enlightenment as he encountered the expulsion of Buddhism in the social scene. Since the persecution began, Korean Buddhism had quickly lost social status, religious hegemony, and public support again. In 1592, Japan invaded the Korean peninsula and the royal court fled from the capital. King *Seonjo* requested *Seon* master Hyujeong, who had served as the leader of both *Seon* and *Gyo* Schools, to take part in the war against Japan. In considering the conditions of Buddhism in the country at that time, the King's request might be difficult to understand. Buddhism was not protected by the royal family any more. Indeed, the possessions of the Sangha reverted to the state and the once high social status of the monks fell to that of an untouchable. However, he responded and encouraged Buddhist monks to engage in warfare. But the reason for his decision is not apparent and it is questionable whether he intentionally sought to reposition *Seon* through the war. Despite this, it is clear that he considered how *Seon* would restore historicity, that is, what *Seon* practice meant to *minjung* in such historical circumstances. His decision was grounded in the traditional teachings of *Seon*. As discussed earlier, one of the unique tenets of *Seon* is *jikjiinsim*, which means pointing directly to one's mind in order to attain enlightenment without recourse to doctrines and precepts. Here, *jikjiinsim* can be observing Buddha-nature for the manifestation of the Buddha. Also, the notion of *muwijnin* proposes that, in the realm of *Seon*, historical and social conditions that define an individual are pointless (Kim P. 2013, 140-144). In this regard, *Seon* is a practice that one can introspect, exclude the outside, and in which one can realise that there is nothing but the mind. Basically, *Seon* practitioners are required to concentrate on the mind regardless of external conditions and circumstances in order to maintain inner peace. In reality, the practitioners look for the voidness of indifference from political and social matters.

Another tenet of *Seon*, *pyeongsangsimsido*, implies that one must care about the mind in everyday life. These principles demonstrate that living beings are *Amitabha* Buddha and the mundane world is the pure land.

For *Seon* master Hyujeong, the distinction between practitioners and living beings is meaningless in the vortex of war. Apparently, he came to the conclusion that *Seon* practitioners cannot attain the Buddhahood without engaging in everyday life of *sattvas* on the grounds that the Buddha and all living beings are identical. Hence, he drove Buddhist monks to the battleground and the ordinary life regardless of the risk of breaking the precepts. For him, that is the essence of Mahayana and *Seon*. Similarly, Korean Buddhism, which had lost religious hegemony from the beginning of the Joseon period, discovered the communal responsibility of enlightenment and the social meaning of ‘the unseen,’ as Jang Ilsoon points out (2009, 209). In the vortex of war, Hyujeong found the social spirituality of *Seon*, which is that enlightenment should be realised not by seclusion and ideology but by practice and engagement. In turn, Korean *Seon* established a tradition of practice which is deep-rooted in the idea that there is no priority between practising for enlightenment and delivering *sattva*. In essence, the locus of *Seon* practice is the realities of *sattva*.

### 4.3. Jang Ilsoon's Understanding of *Seon*

#### 4.3.1. The Metaphor of Buddha-nature

[Feminist theologian] Jeong Hyeongyeong asked:  
Buddhists practise Zen meditation. Christians pray and fast. How do you  
purge your mind?

[Jang Ilsoon answered:]  
I usually walk by myself. I go outside and meet friends. Sometimes I drink  
and chat with them. When I come back home, I walk along the riverbank.  
Then, I can see grass and it teaches me. It takes root and honourably faces the  
sun and the moon. I feel ashamed and inferior to it. Just like this, I get help  
from grass. It is purging my mind.  
(Jang I. n.d. as cited in Choi S. 2004, 226-227)

On occasions, Jang Ilsoon was said to reflect and cultivate his mind, walking along the riverbank. Every time he was walking, it was grass that enlightened him as he noted. There is a famous phrase among his calligraphic works: *baekchosibulmo* (every blade of grass is the Buddha's mother). In fact, grass might be an important image in his thinking, in a way it seems a metaphor of Buddha-nature, because his perception of grass may shine new light on the actualities of grass. In a metaphorical way, grass may refer to the easily trampled or the unseen, whom he frequently encountered. As discussed earlier, the concept of Buddha-nature in East Asian Buddhism was considered as a socially radical idea. In the same vein, Jang Ilsoon saw the nature of Buddha within grass and at the same time he realised that grass, often leading him to understanding, was already the Buddha. Speaking to Japanese visitors in the summer of 1990, Jang Ilsoon said,

The respect of a blade of grass is different from our vanishing attitude towards someone whom you do not like. You should respect a person who has wrong ideas, like a blade of grass. Originally, all things are great [...] In the beauty of a blade of grass, life of the whole universe dwells. When I was young, I did not believe that a lily was more beautiful than the city of Solomon. As I got old, now I know it is true [...] We should tell people when we have a beautiful story [...] Good news is in our meeting with others.  
(Jang I. 2009, 150-151)

In that year Korean society faced a dramatic change in terms of politics. As explained earlier, in January, the military junta and the group for democratisation were united and formed a majority conservative party. As a result, regionalism became permanent and Korean society gradually move to the right. During this period, Jang Ilsoon's dramatic shift was criticised as he started the consumer co-operative movement in the mid-1980s. But he still supported the group for democratisation in a critical way and voiced concern over activist groups (Hwang D. 2014; Kim Y. 2014). On that account, when he mentioned 'someone who you do not like,' it might be related to some turncoats or his acquaintances who switched allegiance for their own interests rather than as a moral obligation (*Sollen*). Indeed, he often sharpened his criticism of politicians from the late 1980s. He pointed out they were prone to ignore their responsibilities and focused on themselves (Jang I. 1993 as cited in BMP 5:12). Despite this, Jang Ilsoon told others to respect them like 'a blade of grass.' This can be an example of how he practically internalises the concept of Buddha-nature in the light of his circumstances. Interestingly, he proposed 'loving' both dictators Park Chung Hee and Jeon Duhwan (Kim Y. 2014; Jang D. 2014). Further, he left a calligraphic work: *Jeongranyuraejeongheegong*, literally meaning my pure orchid comes from Park Chung Hee (Choi S. 2004, 281). Hwang Dogeun interpreted the reason for Jang Ilsoon's paradoxical statement by suggesting that Jang Ilsoon did not hate the nature of humanity (Hwang D. 2014). In terms of Buddhism, he might have had a conviction that the nature of humanity is identical to the nature of the Buddha. It is likely therefore that the concept of Buddha-nature may provide a religious viewpoint in order to spell out his ideological shift from 1977. As discussed earlier, the idea of Buddha-nature in East Asian Buddhism was discussed in a practical way and it highlighted why it existed rather than how it existed.

Accordingly, a tendency to admit both social realities of *sattva* and its dignity as the potentiality of the Buddha emerged in society at large. In his thinking on the image of grass, Jang Ilsoon assumes that *sattva* is the potentiality, having the nature of the Buddha and at the same time it is the actuality clinging to defilement. In some way he concentrates on the essence of humanity as the Buddha and yet his thinking suggests that the nature of the Buddha is not a negation of the realities and history but an affirmation of the here and now, that is, a responsible attitude towards the ordinary life. As the nature of the Buddha is revealed from the image of the *tathāgata* sitting on the withered lotus, Jang Ilsoon tries to depict the Buddha in reality through the image of grass rooted in the riverbank.

#### 4.3.2. *Seon* and Historicality

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, for Jang Ilsoon spirituality means accepting ‘the unseen’ (Jang I. 2009, 209). In that sense, Korean *Seon* is more than likely to be spiritual, simply because its history itself has shown. In theoretical terms, *Seon* accepted ‘the unseen’ Buddha-nature in *sattvas*, and in practical terms, it did not ignore the realities of the socially ‘unseen’ *minjung*, as *Seon* master Hyujeong demonstrated. For Hyujeong, it is the practice of *Bodhisattva* mainly in order to deliver *sattvas* in *gohae* (the bitter sea of pain), and for Jang Ilsoon, it is often called a philosophy of life to restore spirituality in the socio-historical scene of modern Korea (cf. 4.2.2; Hwang D. 2014). Again, the aim of social spirituality of *Seon* is to find the social meaning of religious enlightenment. Further, it seems to remind historicity of ‘the unseen’ in the ordinary life through practice reflecting the mind and time, for history is ‘part of the human conditions’ as Fackenheim asserted (1961, 1). In this

regard, the social spirituality of *Seon* can be the matter of the will. Practice is at the root of *Seon* and practice begins with the will. Given that historicity is related to the will, it can be a compelling argument that the historicity of individuals is the driving force behind historical processes, as Andrew Abbott, a sociologist, pointed out (2005, 3). As for Jang Ilsoon, he did not, or could not, theorise such aspects of social spirituality owing to his political circumstances. Rather, for him, historicity as the will to engage in or the central force for change for ordinary life can be found in his thinking throughout a series of historical events.

These days, people come to see me, who are involved in the reunification movement. So I tell them. ‘Do you act with North Korea? Unless you work with people in South Korea, why on earth are you involved in the movement with North Korea? And, do you have any idea how much our people suffer from regionalism? Even though you cannot unify even our people, reunification with North Korea?’ [...] We should abandon the delusion that you can follow honour through reunification, or that you can catch the ball before it bounces. In fact, when I speak with people who have come to me for years or activist leaders, they are in an impossible position. So, do you know what the problem is? Does your everyday life go well? You should sort it out from the mind and a holistic perspective. I reckon this is very important. (Jang I. 1993 as cited in BMP 5:9)

In 1993, Jang Ilsoon had a talk, presumably the last published one, with Professor Choi Junseok who was engaged in a grass roots cultural movement. Indeed, in that year Bishop Ji Haksoon passed away. Bishop Ji was Jang’s closest companion and his death dealt a shattering blow to Jang Ilsoon (Jeong I. 2014). Before long, that autumn he was hospitalised again as his health had rapidly deteriorated (Lee Y. 2011, 194). In addition, Korea had established diplomatic relations with China in 1992 and the hostile relations between both nations had lasted for four decades since the Korean War. Also, in terms of politics, the first democratic government was formed by direct election since 1948. Such a socio-political scene led activist groups who had drifted away in the late 1980s to turn their eyes on the reunification movement as a new

paradigm of social movements. It seems quite certain that Jang Ilsoon was well aware of the current mood of the reunification movement. However, according to Jang Dongcheon, as activist groups moved sharply to the left, his father saw it in a negative sense. Jang Ilsoon believed that the discussion about harmony and balance between the two nations should be prioritised and reunification was not a matter of formality, even though as his life showed, he was a passionate advocate of reunification so that he was imprisoned (cf. 1.1). In 1961, Park Chung Hee and his military junta put him in prison for publicly advocating the neutralised reunification (BMP 7:14; Jang D. 2014; Kim Y. 2014). This poses a question why he changed his attitudes towards the existing discussion of reunification and even criticised it.

Jang Ilsoon had witnessed the devastating ending of the Gwangju uprising in May 1980 and he thought of historicity as resistance, aiming for ‘the deeper world’ and hiding his will (Jang D. 2014; BMP 4:14-15). Indeed, this is the controversial point as to why he has been considered as the fence-sitter and I will discuss this in detail in the next chapter. Also, it is the point that the historicity of *Seon* emerges in his thinking, which Hyujeong had realised four hundred years ago on the battlefield. Hyujeong believed that this *Seon* would be realised in the realities of *sattvas*, but Jang Ilsoon might find another aspect of historicity of *Seon*.



Figure 1. Jang Ilsoon (1924-1994), *In-u-gu-bul-gyeon*

As figure 1 shows, this is the last phrase of Hyujeong's *Seon* poem *Ingyeongutal* (to take away both the person and the surroundings): *Inugubulgyeon* (to be seen neither as the person nor the bull). This seems to be inspired by Linji's Four Classifications (cf. Ives and Gishin 2002, 111-118). As seen before, since Hyujeong abandoned his eminent position, he was said to devote himself to practice and travelled around the country. Then, in 1558 he went to back to his spiritual roots and wrote this poem. It seems probable that he attempted to show that one could end the quest for enlightenment by transcending the *hwanhwa* (illusion) of the reality and the *gyeonggye* (objects of perception).

In 1977, Jang Ilsoon could start a 'higher level' of resistance than before, after he decided to overcome the existing paradigm of social movements (Kim Y. 2014). He might find an answer to his long-standing question how he could interact with his surroundings, not like Hyujeong, as a commander of warrior monks in the war with Japan, but as a practitioner. But Hyujeong could keep the dominant ethical paradigm and social order, although he faced criticism that he pursued this-worldly honour and

benefit and broke the Buddhist precept. In turn, the persecution of Buddhism continued in the post-war confusion contrary to Hyujeong's expectation.

On the other hand, before historical obligation Jang Ilsoon voiced concern over the continuing paradigm of the reunification movement, regardless of mounting criticism. This seems the difference in the way each one understands historicity on the basis of *Seon* teachings. Furthermore, Jang Dongcheon said that he was shocked at what was shown in his father's calligraphic works after 1988. Indeed, the circumstances around Jang Ilsoon in the 1980s became more stable as his son testifies (2014). He attempted to go beyond 'the well built by himself' as his thinking deepened (Jang D. 2104). Such a philosophical leap and reflection on historicity can be found in his discourse on reunification.

Although most of the current literature on Jang Ilsoon pays little attention to the influence of Buddhist ideas on Jang's life and thinking, in this chapter I have attempted to identify the distinguishing characteristics of *Seon* as the first step towards tracing his controversial, or even dramatic, shift in his later years. As discussed in this chapter, *Seon* as a practice based on the concept of Buddha-nature supports the idea that its spiritual aspect necessarily leads to socio-historical engagement. Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, it is now possible to state that his thinking was influenced by social awareness of *Seon*.

In the subsequent chapter, I will examine the development of Jang's thought, by illuminating the way in which it interacted with his surroundings in the socio-political scene of modern Korea.

## Chapter 5

### The Socio-Religious Thought of Jang Ilsoon: A Development in the Catholic Church in Korea

*Love is not an affection for the temptation nor blind obedience to the threat.*  
— Bishop Ji Haksoon, *A letter from prison*

This chapter concerns the change and development of Jang Ilsoon's social thought in the socio-political context of modern Korea, which was discussed in the first two chapters. In the previous chapters I examined the way in which he internalised the social significance of the distinct religious ideas of Catholicism, *Donghak* and *Seon*. Here I grapple with his ideological shift and development, which is still ambiguous, by scrutinising the way in which his religious surroundings interact with the socio-historical context from a religious angle. According to his son, Dongcheon (2014), it may be unfeasible to divide Jang's thought chronologically in some respects, although there have often been efforts to systematise or theorise the fragmentary parts of his thinking. Such piecemeal approaches have solely focused on his later years, thus that could be unexpectedly or unintentionally biased. The primary concern of this chapter is to appreciate the significance of religious ideas in the development of his social thinking from his early life. From this, it can be possible to grasp his seemingly contradictory thought, which seems to be 'a furnace' of religious ideas, and also his incomprehensible behaviour (Ri Y. 2006, 452). Currently, on the

basis of accessible material, it can be said that his thinking emerged and was applied to the reality through personal and social practice after the Korean War. Thus, I trace his thinking from the post-war period through the lens of religion.

### 5.1. Exploring the Catholic Nature of Jang Ilsoon: 1950 – 1965

It was told that Mr Jang [Ilsoon] was baptised at Wondong Catholic church, Wonju when he graduated from Wonju primary school [in 1940]. This is his story during the Korean War. He was inspected by an army officer while he was fleeing. That officer mistook him for a North Korean soldier because of his short hair. So he was to be executed there. An executioner asked him that he had last words. Then Mr Jang breezed out and crossed himself holding his rosary. The soldier reported this to his superior officer and Mr Jang could escape from the execution. Because the officer said that a Catholic could not be a communist. (BMP 12:14)

In 1952, Jang Ilsoon returned from military service to his hometown when the war began to languish. In Wonju he first taught at Seongyuk Higher Civic School, which was a non-approved school for primary school graduates who could not afford to receive secondary education. They could not hold certification and proceed to a higher grade school. For this reason, he took over this school and established Daeseong High School in 1954, which was named after Pyeongyang Daeseong School that An Changho, a nationalist, founded in 1907, as Japan openly revealed its colonialist invasion in East Asia (cf. 1.1 and 1.2). To heal a nation, An Changho consistently stressed the importance of independent power, which needed to be based upon Christian faith (Lee M. 2002, 46-47).

However, Jang's Daeseong School was not intended to be a faith school. As Lee Gyeoonguk (2014) testified, Jang hardly ever proselytised his faith to his people, even though most of his friends and disciples had become Catholic under his

influence. Indeed, his faith seemed devout but seemed to remain at a personal or ecclesial level until he met Bishop Ji Haksoon. His brother noted:

[He was] a reliable Catholic communicant. But he did not show his belief nor proselytise it. Rather, he tried to keep on the straight and narrow. He heartily respected Jesus so he tried to imitate Jesus' words and behaviour. My brother did not want to show off [his faith]. (Jang H. 2014)

Regardless of his attitude towards the Church, the motto of his school was 'Be sincere' as he seemed to agree with An Changho's educational aim. Indeed, Jang taught the class of philosophy and often told students about An's Young Korean Academy, a nationalist movement organisation, which had been established in San Francisco (BMP 15:7). In this sense, it can be said that Jang mainly concurred with An's idealistic notion of *gyoyukguguk* (education saves the nation) and passion for education. Admittedly, Jang even said that he loved the school more than his son (Choi S. 2004, 24). Here it is worth noting that, from a political perspective, the majority of conservative nationalist groups like An Changho, focusing on education as an essential of independence, joined the opposition Democratic Party after the liberation period. But Jang Ilsoon seemed not to pursue a politically and ideologically identical direction, although he partly agreed with the nationalists' educational aim.

As explained in the first chapter, in 1958 Jang Ilsoon stood for the fourth general election as an independent and was defeated (cf. 1.1). In July 1960, he was a candidate for the Social Mass Party (SMP), a new progressive group, but was defeated again. In the spring of that year, a presidential election was rigged by the regime and it led to nationwide protests. In turn, through the April Revolution President Lee Seungman resigned and went off into exile in Hawaii (Cumings 2005, 344-352). Civil society became an open space in terms of ideology and politics, thus it was a golden opportunity for a new progressive group to challenge a conservative

bipartisan system, which had lost its political hegemony in the liberation period. The SMP was established in such political conditions and covered an ideologically broad spectrum from leftists to nationalists. The party publicly declared that its political aim was based on democratic socialism of the 1951 Frankfurt Declaration and a peaceful reunification. But in reality, a peaceful reunification was regarded as a dangerous, radical and possibly treasonous notion although the civil revolution achieved the democratic order. Jang Ilsoon's brother, Hwasoon, remembered that there were serious concerns and a strong objection among his family. Indeed, after his election defeat and the subsequent military coup, his family suffered greatly because they were accused of being communists (Jang H. 2014).

As noted above, progressive groups supporting a peaceful reunification were still not welcomed in Korean society that leaned towards anti-communist ideology. Despite this, his motive for standing as a candidate for the SMP was not obvious. By the end of the 1950s the Catholic Church in Korea publicly supported the opposition Democratic Party (DP) in the overall tone of the Church-owned press (KDF 2009, 2:381). Given the political circumstances of the opposition takeover, for Jang Ilsoon as a Catholic, it would have been advantageous to be a Democratic Party candidate. His brother said that one of Jang Ilsoon's friends had advised him to join the DP, whereas Kim Jiha, his favourite disciple and a poet, argued that Jang Ilsoon was linked to the progressive nationalist personages, such as Yeo Unhyeong, and Jo Bongam after the liberation period (Jang H. 2014; Kim J. 2000 in RMG 2004, 188). Lee Hyeonju, a Methodist minister, also recollected that Jang Ilsoon cried when telling a story about Jo Bongam who was executed by Lee Seungman's regime (Lee H. cited in Choi S. 2004, 160f). However, some of Jang's disciples try to avoid any ideological linkage to the progressive force on the grounds that of late no material has

been found in relation to Jang's relations with the progressive group (Park J. cited in RMG 2004, 171; Kim Y. 2014). Now it is recognised that he was highly critical of Lee's regime in the 1950s (Jang I. 2009). Indeed, Lee's regime cancelled registration of the Progress Party before the 1958 general election. It can thus be said that like most progressive intellectuals, Jang had to stand as an independent. As Kim Yongu (2014) pointed out, the most crucial point made so far is that he was strongly critical of the society at the time and progressive enough to support the neutralised reunification in ideological terms.

Pertinently, this can be seen as an explanation for Jang's ideological shift in the late 1970s if he partly concurred with the SMP's ideological line. The SMP was known to disapprove of the ideology of the Soviet Union at the time. From the early 1980s he was critical of the student movement, which was ideologically slanted towards Marxism and its theory of class conflict. Despite the fact that he experienced what the war was really like, which the ideological conflict caused, it is debatable whether he followed the twentieth-century Church's theological stance against communism. Therefore, it is difficult to grasp his social thought in a religious sense, during this period.

Currently, it appears that Jang was a devout Catholic layperson in the post-war period. Here it is interesting to note that he was a member of the Legion of Mary (*Legio Mariae*). Before standing for his first election, he attended weekly meetings of the Legion of Mary in 1956 and served as the first president of praesidium at Wondong church, Wonju. He was the first lay leader of the organisation in Wonju (Ji Haksoon Justice and Peace Foundation [JJPF] 2000, 127f).<sup>18</sup> In 1921, the Legion of

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<sup>18</sup> At the time Wonju was encompassed in Catholic Diocese of Chuncheon.

Mary had been founded as a lay apostolate organisation in Ireland and introduced to the Korean Church in 1953. It is noteworthy that Jang had served in the front line of the Catholic lay ecclesial movement before the national body of the Legion of Mary called the Senatus was approved in 1958. The somewhat ambiguous though generally known aim of the organisation is to express the glory of God through the sanctification of its legionaries and of the world. This legionary service is built on the doctrinal foundation linked to Matthew 25.40, which implies that Christians could find Christ in the marginalized and the weak.<sup>19</sup> In a nutshell, its spiritual focus is the societal relationship of humanity on the grounds that Christianity is a religion that focuses on one person, Christ, rather than ethics and sacraments. In its spirituality, they consider those who they can encounter as the representation of Christ. Such a radical aspect seems to have been emphasised at both a personal and ecclesial level since its inception. In this respect, for Jang Ilsoon as the first leader of the organisation, his role of educator may be conceived of as the realisation of its spirituality and a ‘work of God’ ultimately. However, in consequence, this young Catholic’s political challenge was obstructed by a wall of ideology and ended in failure. Jang recollected his unsuccessful and pointless challenge:

If I had entered politics like that, then I would have become a thief in three years. The political system is so. If then, I could not do what I wanted. Also, it would be a betrayal to my students and those who have walked with me. It is a betrayal both to those whom I have met in everyday life and to the people. (Jang I. 2009, 158)

Although he failed to be elected, he was committed to his social and religious ideals at the time. From a religious perspective, it is worth noting that his reflection on

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<sup>19</sup> Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me. (Matthew 25.40b)

this failure led him to pursue his aims unquestioningly and uncritically within the Church's guidance and teachings in the subsequent years. In this sense, his early failure in politics may explain how he had firmly distanced himself from politics in the 1980s as his political surroundings changed, and why he could remain in the Church and Wonju.

Finally, in reality his political attempt caused unimaginable and long-term suffering to him and his people. After the 1961 military coup led by Park Chung Hee, the military junta lacked procedural and political legitimacy and mass support. Thus, the junta started to oppress and execute the existing political force and organised dissident groups. Three days after the coup, Jang was accused of his participation in the SMP and support for neutralised reunification (Jo H. 2007, 24-29; cf. 1.3). This broke up his family. His mother passed away while he was in prison and his father died of disease soon after he was released (Jang D. 2014). After he had lost his parents and his surroundings changed, there seemed to be a marked change in his thinking. As his wife noted:

He experienced immense hardship. His life was a series of stresses. To relieve those, he drank and cried, singing 'Morning Dew.' He lamented the state of affairs. Those tears showed a lot [...] (Lee I. cited in Kim S. 2008)

He became a different person (Choi S. 2004, 28). Indeed, once an outspoken young man Jang Ilsoon rubbed an inkstick in his room and farmed grapes in the fields, instead of standing in the front line of resistance. According to his son, from then, he considered himself as a farmer (Jang D. 2014). Consequently, in this period there are two important points in relation to Jang Ilsoon's social thought. First, he conceived himself as an educator. His political challenge can also be understood in line with this self-awareness. Second, in a religious sense, he was a devout young

leader of lay people in the Church, who was faithful to its pastoral guidance, although Jeon Hogeun, a scholar on classical Eastern philosophy, hypothesises (2015, 800ff) in his recent analysis that Jang's Catholic faith is insignificant. In essence, Jang realised the limit of the political group led by ideologically slanted intellects through his political challenge. In a religious sense, this failed experience could also serve as a foundation of his religiosity, in which there can be found '*minjung-seong* (popularity), simplicity, and ordinariness' (RMG 2004, 37).

## 5.2. Catholic Resistance, 1965 – 1980

Under Park Chung Hee's dictatorial regime, which seemed to be the most brutal one in modern Korean history, there existed Jang's three ideological turning points in: 1) 1965 when he met Bishop Ji Haksoon, 2) 1974 when Bishop Ji Haksoon was under arrest and Jang engaged in the democratic movement, and in 3) 1980 when Jang was firmly determined to rethink existing movements. In the period of the 1960s and the 1970s these turning points show that his ideological development could be derived from modern Catholic social teachings from the Second Vatican Council. Particularly, as it will be discussed later in this chapter, during the 1970s the political resistance of the Korean Catholic Church was influenced by Vatican II and at the same time it was developed from the existing pattern of resistance: theory and praxis in that order. Resistance began with a practical response to political repression and societal challenge to human dignity, and then broad theological reflection followed. In this present chapter, Catholic resistance is therefore used in its broadest sense to refer

to the Church's socio-political engagement such as anti-dictatorship movement, which is firmly based on modern Catholic social teachings. Jang's Catholic resistance emerged from the urgency, thus there has been a research gap with respect to his theological or ecclesial understanding. Indeed, it is noteworthy from what we have already discussed in the previous chapters that there exists the research gap between his social thought in the 1970s and the ecclesial or theological impact on him. Most research on his thought, including the most recent and insightful study by Jeon Hogeun (2015), a classical scholar, has tended to interpret his thinking in his later years in terms of East Asian classical religious philosophy such as Daoism. Yet Jang's ideological awakening and development in the 1980s is one aspect of his thought, which emerged from his social surroundings. Rather, in order to grasp the change in his last years, which is the focus of existing studies about him, it is necessary to scrutinise the way in which he internalised Catholic resistance in the 1970s after meeting Bishop Ji Haksoon in 1965 and reading about the theological and pastoral shift of Vatican II.

#### 5.2.1. The Influence of Bishop Ji on Jang Ilsoon, 1965 – 1973

In 1965, Jang Ilsoon met Bishop Ji Haksoon who would become the most important person in his whole life. This can explain how he became a 'shadow leader' of the most influential democratic movement group, under the umbrella of the Catholic Church, despite the fact that he was a mere dissident in a little rural town (Kim Y. 2014). In March 1965, the Vatican established the Diocese of Wonju as the fourteenth Diocese in the Korean peninsula to commemorate Vatican II, and appointed Bishop Ji who had just turned forty years old. In that year, he would attend

the last session of the Council. He was known to be inspired by the spirit of the Council and set his pastoral aims as the ecclesial reform from below based on lay apostolate (JJPF 2000, 70-81). And Jang Ilsoon was recommended as the right person to assist his pastoral work. He remembered then:

In the mid-1960s I was released from prison and returned [to Wonju]. I was thinking of how to develop our power against the tyranny of the military regime. Considering this, Buddhists can rarely gather but Christians like Catholics and Protestants can gather weekly. So, if we suggested a Christian living following Christ's words, it would be an energy of life [...]. That entered my mind. At that time the Wonju Diocese was established, as it happened. Bishop Ji Haksoon was looking for someone to help him and he met me. Then, he asked me what my thought was about how to guide the Church. I told him that then the Church ought to be one for the faithful [and the unfaithful]. For this, education was the first thing to do and the Church itself [would need to be] transformed into an independent order. And I said that because it would be a foundation for the Church's attitudes to society. (Jang I. 2004, 114-115).

Likewise, Jang still seemed focused on educational aims, thus he advised the bishop to focus his pastoral work on education. For him, education was 'a mutual action of consciousness happening in one place' (Park J. in RMG 2004, 166). After his own political challenge had been unsuccessful, their encounter provided another opportunity, one for new theological openness and spatial potentiality of the Church. As noted before, the Church could provide the only place where he could devote himself again to his ideals on social reform as he was legally prohibited from every social activity. Therefore, a new social vision of the Church, which Bishop Ji brought to Wonju, led Jang to rethink Catholicism and it became the matrix of his critical thinking behind the 1970s-democratic movement in Wonju.

From 1965, the lay leadership training was initiated in the Diocese of Wonju. Jang as the first president of the lay apostolate organised a group to study the conciliar documents weekly, and delivered a lecture to laypeople (BMP 12:10f; Lee G. in BMP 18:9). As for the conciliar documents, Bishop Ji brought them from Japan and Jang

was assigned to translate them (Kim Y. 2014; RMG 2004, 152). Despite the fact that the majority of priests were from abroad in Wonju, it was uncommon for a layperson to translate and study the ecclesial documents. It is likely that Bishop Ji perceived Jang's clear understanding of the reality of the modern Church. While Jang was not a theologically well-equipped person, he had some social knowledge and awareness from his earlier education. Bishop Ji also hoped that Jang could serve as a well-prepared lay leader to assist his pastoral work and to reform the stagnant Church (JJPF 2000, 80ff). In fact, I could not access the detailed material in relation to his ecclesial services as a leader of the lay apostolate when I conducted field research in Wonju in 2014. Because no ecclesial or personal documents left in relation to his activity. Therefore, it might be too early to reach a conclusion that his ideas were not theologically influenced by the Church and Vatican II as it has often been assumed. Rather, he embraced his Catholic identity and practically reflected on the social roles of the Church in the light of his position and activity in the diocese.

Jang was known to be actively engaged in Cursillo, a Catholic apostolate movement, that was introduced to the Korean Church in 1967 (JJPF 2000, 82). Its ideology was based on pride in Christian spirituality, conception of active Christian spirituality, knowledge about contemporaries and affirmation on lay apostolate. In this sense, its primary concern was not ecclesial but societal from its beginning (Yu S. 1973, 13-20). Indeed, Jang joined the first Cursillo of the diocese as a leader and participated in the second national Cursillo in August 1967. All these events were held before the Cursillo Movement in Korea was officially inaugurated in June 1970 (BMP 12:13). Each church generally considered their social status and level of knowledge in order to recommend the laity to take part in Cursillo. Thus, it is almost certain that Jang was already considered as a lay leader. Indeed, the organisation

officially joined the democratic movement of the Church in the fourth Ultreya held in October 1974, a national meeting, after Bishop Ji was arrested in July 1974 (KDF 2009, 2:388f). Thus, there is a possibility that Jang, who was actively involved in the movement, was rather influenced by its social climate. In addition, a Vatican II-inspired bishop's full support helped him as a lay leader to actively engage in the lay apostolate (Kim Y. 2014). As seen before, Bishop Ji Haksoon's pastoral aim was to make the Church independent financially and theologically. In order to do this, he usually preferred to work with the laity, in turn cursillistas like Jang Ilsoon were at the centre of the lay apostolate in Wonju from the late 1960s (BMP 18:9).

Additionally, in 1969 Jang encouraged young Catholics to look into the reality of the Catholic Youth Association (CYA) at local churches in order to form diocesan CYA. At the time the political conditions gradually changed as the Park regime planned to extend its dictatorship on economic grounds (Cumings 2005, 361-368). He recognised the practical and organised preparation at the ecclesial level through the CYA, for the democratic movement would begin in the near future (BMP 15:8-9; Ji H. 1983, 76). According to Lee Changbok who served as the president of the national CYA in 1971, Jang supported the social movement within the Church. He also pointed out that Jang's unobtrusive guidance and advice played a significant role in the Catholic youth movement in the early 1970s when the regime's oppressive attempt to prolong its rule became evident (BMP 19:87-89).

Assuming that his only space to teach and meet people and speak freely were provided within the Church, it is rather obvious for him to find the ideological driving force for social reform in the legacy of Vatican II, such as the lay apostolate. It is thus noteworthy that he gradually understood the social roles of the Church by participating in the lay apostolate such as CYA and Cursillo. As far as Vatican II is

concerned, it seems necessary to look at the observation of Donal Dorr (2012), a theologian and a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He underlines that the social legacy of the Church, which the Council supported, even though it is still debatable, stemmed from the gradual change of the Church's attitudes to the temporal power and its contemporaries from Leo XIII. First, in a socio-political sense the Church ought to admit the autonomy of the temporal power on the grounds of reciprocity, in order to enhance the common good. This understanding is in line with the Church's continuing reformist stance on the status quo and conservative approach to the roles of the state (O'Brien and Shannon 2010, 85; GS 74, 76). Indeed, in the process of the rationalisation of Catholic social teachings, this principle was significantly proposed in the 1970s. Second, in a theological sense the doctrine of revelation and grace ought to be reinterpreted and at the same time the concept of justice and love ought to be presented as the guiding concept of the social movement of the Church. In Vatican II, the concept of Christian love refers to the fulfilment of the law in the light of the work of Christ (GS 32). The concept of justice also shows that both believers and non-believers ought to be redefined as the people of God, that is the subject and object of social redemption in the light of theological understanding of the interconnectivity between the Church, as Christ's metaphorical body, and humankind as Christ's eschatological body. From a Christological perspective, this means that the conventional comparison between the Church as the subject and humankind as the object in Christian soteriology is not adequate any longer in terms of the ecclesial role in the modern world. Bishop Ji clarified this in a simple and pastoral term in his 1973 pastoral letter, which has been regarded as a historic document in the democratic movement in the Diocese of Wonju. The Church's love ought to be founded on unconditional interest in *minjung* and its justice ought to be

founded on Christ's teachings to serve the neighbours and help the poor (Ji H. 1983, 77-78). Jang Ilsoon had also adhered to Bishop Ji's pastoral principles. In reality, Jang sought to realise solidarity with the people of God, primarily in their harsh conditions, as unconditional love and uncompromising justice as Bishop Ji emphasised. For this reason, Jang was remembered as Bishop Ji's 'soulmate' regardless of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (Jeong I. 2014). Like this, modern Catholic social teachings fostered in Vatican II was expressed as the *minjung*-directed movement based on solidarity with *minjung* in a 'pastoral collaboration' between Bishop Ji and Jang beyond the continuing critique of the ideological bias of the *minjung* in the Korean Church and theology.

#### 5.2.2. The Occurrence of Catholic Resistance, 1974 – 1980

On 6 July 1974, Bishop Ji Haksoon was forcibly arrested by the KCIA (Korean Central Intelligence Agency) agents at the Gimpo Airport, Seoul, as he returned from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences meeting. In April that year, the authorities imprisoned 235 including university students on a charge of plotting the overthrow of the state abetted by North Korea. Bishop Ji was suspected of assisting and being behind them. In this case, Kim Jiha, who was one of Jang Ilsoon's favourite students and attended Seoul National University, was given a death sentence (Jo H. 2007, 157-159; KDF 2009, 2:381). Indeed, Jang was then shattered and often showed his tears because of Kim's sentence and Bishop Ji's imprisonment (Lee Y. 2011, 129; Choi S. 2004, 34). This unprecedented imprisonment of a Catholic bishop led the priests and the laity, who had opposed the social engagement of the Church, to think of joining the social movement. As a consequence, the *Sajedan* (the Catholic

Priests' Association for Justice) was inaugurated in November 1974 and the Church officially joined the anti-dictatorship force (cf. 2.2.2). In February the following year, Bishop Ji, who received a fifteen-year sentence, was released and returned to Wonju. Jang Ilsoon's third son, Dongcheon, remembered that moment:

When Bishop Ji Haksoon was in prison, that was intense. Every time we went to mass, it was about the state of affairs. I was a child. When Bishop Ji was released. [...] He was coming from Wonju railway station and people took their clothes off and put them on the ground. I reckon that it was a place to vent their pent-up feelings and to express their overwhelming emotions. I cannot forget that moment even now. What I saw [...] (Jang D. 2014)

It is generally assumed that Bishop Ji was put forward by Jang Ilsoon to resist the situation with the spirit of a martyr (Choi S. 2004, 34). A mere layman proposed his bishop to suffer martyrdom not for faith but for social justice. Previously, Bishop Ji was known to presciently accept Jang Ilsoon's practical suggestion for the movement (Jang D. 2014). However, Jang's intention of resisting the authorities was not to participate in politics again but to help people being falsely accused by the oppressive regime. It was basically an extension of the existing movement within the Church. Thus, his 1970s-democratic movement was not a political movement but one of social justice, that is Catholic resistance (Jang I. 2009, 184).

In the 1970s the image and role of the Church in Wonju was significantly different from the late nineteenth century one depicted by sociologists as a wall against societal change (cf. Greeley 2000, 123ff). Furthermore, as seen before, the pastoral and social synergy that was created by Bishop Ji Haksoon and Jang Ilsoon in Wonju seemed to be revolutionary rather than reactionary. As reformers caused a hole in the old order of Western Europe in the sixteenth century, Bishop Ji and Jang started to shake from below the unjust and pseudo-modern social order caused by Park Chung Hee's developmental dictatorship. In more specific terms, the spectre of

industrialisation and dictatorship had caused the societal problems such as social inequality and loss of humanity, from the 1970s. During that period, Jang focused on the social role of the Church to restore the common good and the people of God in a broad sense (cf. GS 11; 24; 26; 32; 45). According to Jang, Catholic resistance ought to be theologically rooted in Catholic communitarianism and solidarity and embodied in the specific space. Like this, Catholic resistance, which was triggered in Vatican II, unexpectedly emerged in the most disadvantaged diocese in the Korean Church.

Another relevant point regarding Catholic resistance is that it is based on the societal understanding of theological anthropology (cf. 2.1.2). The Council strongly states that the nature of human beings is social and in ontological terms humans are created in the image of God. But in the modern world, humans, made in the image of God as ‘weak and sinful beings’, suffer ontological imbalance between endless desire and human limitations (GS 10). Thus, the social nature of human beings is ruled and distorted by materialism. In this sense, the basic implication of theological anthropology, which was proposed in Vatican II, is to admit the sinful conditions of humanity. It can thus refer to resistance to the social order to destroy and distort the communitarian character of humanity. The twentieth-century Church has sought the potential for resistance in the human conscience, and as explained before, in 1974 the unintended despair and rage led Jang to stand on the front line of resistance again.

In this regard, Catholic resistance seems to hold a prominent place within his social thought. Since Jang Ilsoon met Bishop Ji Haksoon in 1965, he had attempted to realise the principle of solidarity in the social sphere of Wonju, especially, concerning its geographical spatiality; his main concern was how to foster solidarity with the farmers, as John XXIII highlighted in his encyclical *Mater et magistra* (RMG 2004, 172). He was also known to conceive himself as a farmer (Jang D. 2014). Before

1974, in spite of political upheaval, for Jang Ilsoon the farmers were the subject and object of the ecclesial social movement in which he was involved and the space of the social movement was the Church.

However, Bishop Ji's arrest and imprisonment in 1974 led Jang's thinking to change in many ways, as noted before. Although Bishop Ji was released in the following year, with the tide of democratisation, the Church's resistance became more active. Starting with *Sajedan*, priestly and monastic organisations such as the Justice and Peace Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, the Association of Major Superiors of Women Religious and Association of Catholic Sisters, and lay organisations such as Catholic Lay Apostolate Council of Korea, Cursillo, and the Catholic Farmer's Movement (CFM) continuously held prayer meetings about the state of affairs. The more resistance hardened, the more the authorities oppressed. As priests of *Sajedan* were arrested, violent repression became common (KDF 2009, 2:380-393).

In ecclesial terms, there were growing calls to justify the social engagement of the Church in a theological sense through Bishop Ji's confinement. Indeed, John XXIII's encyclicals and conciliar documents were repeatedly quoted in the fields of protest (Ibid., 404-407). From 1965 the democratic movement group led by Jang had already prepared in terms of theology and systems. As noted above, Wonju could actively take part in the democratic movement on the basis of Catholic social teachings. But their organised and thorough preparation caused Jang and his group an unintended outcome. His inner conflict, which individuals in activist groups suffered after the partial democratisation in the June 1987 mobilisation, might have begun sometime around 1977 (Jang I. 2009, 163; Kim Y. 2014; Cumings 2005, 391-396). In

essence, in his life and thought the most significant leap or change occurred in the extreme of ideological conflicts of resistance.

In the 1970s, once conformist farmers and workers in the period of developmental dictatorship were independently and critically engaged in the resistance movement, most activist groups then aimed at becoming part of a *minjung*-centred movement. *Minjung* became the subject of the movement. Such identification and subjectivisation of *minjung* emerged as the ecclesial support for the workers' movement and farmers' movement became steadily organised and its theology of resistance developed from the mid-1970s (cf. Jang S. 2007; Gang J. and Kim J. 2011). Nevertheless, Jang Ilsoon may have noticed the other side of ideological conflicts. In a way, the conflict between the theological innovation of the Council and the doctrinal heritage of the Church seems inevitable in relation to social engagement. Jang could not ignore this potential danger of ideological conflicts because of his understanding of the conciliar documents. Further, as Choi Jangjip (2010), a political scientist, pointed out in his analysis on Korean democracy, the social movements have been broadly supported by the civil society when political democratisation is the main issue. On the other hand, when the issues move to relatively radical matters, such as labour or social class, it has caused the external intervention or political failure. Jang apprehended such a pattern of the Korean democratic movement.

At the time, in the process of changing the characteristic of the democratic movement, the socio-logical influence of Liberation theology and *Minjung* theology was immense, thus a demand for theological solidarity increased. In turn, the democratic movement of the Church became rather inclined to specific ideological aspects of Marxism, such as class struggle. However, this apprehension prevalent among Jang's group seems to be arguably ahead of its time. In reality, in the socio-

political sphere the *minjung*-oriented leftist movement emerged during the first half of the 1980s (cf. Koo 1993, 142ff).

Jang Ilsoon's concerns over partly the leftist movement and class conflict can be seen in the twentieth-century Catholic social teachings. Since Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, the Church has constantly dismissed both liberal individualism and totalitarian socialism, underlying any revolutionary change (RN 11; 12). The reason behind its unilateral rejection of socialism is mainly economic in order to protect the inviolable principle of private property.

As I was engaged in both the consumer co-op movement and the anti-dictatorship movement in the 1970s, I thought it necessary to overcome the traditional Marxist paradigm. Then, this could not solve the current problem nor break out of a vicious circle. (Jang I. 2009, 155)

Yet Jang Ilsoon views that socialism, based on Marxism and its conception of resistance as a method of revolution, generally implies a destructive nature, such as impersonality, conformity and class division (cf. 2.1.2). As discussed above, for him the nature of Catholic resistance refers to the restoration of human nature. He also hypothesised that the current dictatorial regime was to collapse, hence he sought to find the way in which human life could be sustainable (BMP 49:27).

Arguably, it is likely that his belief, who had been a devout Catholic and lay apostolate activist, transcended Catholicism in religious, at least doctrinal, terms in 1977. Yet this has been a contentious issue. As discussed in chapter 4, the majority of his disciples disagree on the argument that his thinking had changed since 1977. Despite this, he seemed to be required to review the appropriateness of the current approach to the farmers' movement on the basis of economic gloom. Indeed, statistics shows that gross agricultural output continuously decreased in the 1970s. Such a drop resulted from the loss of the will to produce and that rural exodus (KDF 2009, 2:626-

627). From 1974 the authorities also executed deportation in Gangwon province including Wonju (Park J. cited in RMG 2004, 173). This pathetic-looking circumstance might have caused a time of ideological or emotional stress for him as he managed both the farmers' movement and the democratic one (Ibid., 177). As Kim Jiha puts it, Jang might have been in a state of inner conflict from 1977 (RMG 2004, 198). From the late 1970s his state of inner conflict became serious as political circumstances around him changed rapidly. But the Gwangju democratic uprising gave him a strong conviction that a traditional method for resistance ought to be revisited.

As President Park Chung Hee was assassinated in October 1979 and the civil society lost its direction of resistance, the military group led by General Jeon Duhwan executed a premeditated coup in May 1980. The military junta dismissed civilian demand for democracy and declared martial law. In Gwangju, local people and university students demanded the repeal of martial law, and democratisation, then the military junta ruthlessly suppressed their protests. That caused fierce resistance, in turn approximately 250 students and citizens were killed and over 3000 people were injured in the democratic uprising (Cumings 2005, 382-386; Jeong H. 2011, 50-75). Gang Taeyong, an Orthodox priest, commented about what had happened in Wonju:

On 18 May [1980 the] Gwangju uprising occurred and we had some tragic news [...] CFM [Catholic Farmer's Movement] senior staff came together. We broadly agreed that we should express our stance and determination. I visited Jang Ilsoon and told him about our determination. He said to me, 'Do nothing in Wonju. Any rebellion must not occur. Do you get it? Do not call any meeting regarding Gwangju. You must dissuade them and risk your life. Understood?' (BMP 17:16)

He noticed the characteristic of the authorities, which had continued for decades, thus his decision was to protect civilians from physical violence in Wonju under martial law. In interpreting his response in May 1980, Kim Yeongju, who

denies a marked shift in his thought, Jang's attitude was unrelated to ideological defection. Rather, he had prepared a new level of resistance (Kim Y. 2014). His youngest son, Dongcheon, also presumes that his father's resistance had moved to a different level (Jang D. 2014). In a way, as they speculate, a different level implies inevitable contextualisation of Catholic resistance so as to defend human nature and dignity against the oppression of the dictatorial regime.

That [diversion of era] is seen in Jesus' conversation with Pontius Pilate. Pilate asked him whether he was the King of Jews and he replied that it was Pilate's words. If we are entirely different from one another, the conditions of good and bad will be different. If we make the same mistake, then it matters. But we cannot live in a new culture in a traditional way. Because it is totally different. (Jang I. 2009, 163).

However, it is rather reasonable to view 1980 as the final turning point of his thought on the basis of a marked change in his surroundings. Lee Geungrae also pointed out that Jang's thinking was closely linked to social change in the 1980s (Lee G. in RMG 2004, 158). Indeed, Jang's circumstances were more stable than the previous decade and he felt free in every sense. His son noted:

In 1980, my father hid in my uncle's house when there was an uprising. Because in the beginning of the 1980s there were civil disturbances and the social order was totally different between the 1970s and the 1980s [...] I presume that the resistance movement was more 'primal' in the 1970s. But for my father it was the complete opposite. Rather, after the Gwangju rebellion he became entirely different from the past. It was not about real politics [...] In the 1970s he was close to the social movement, but since the 1980s he moved into a different dimension. (Jang D. 2014)

It is likely that such circumstances broadened his thinking in a religious sense, arguably, in a socio-political scene that could be seen as a change of methodology. Despite this, it is worth noting that he changed into an entirely different person (Hwang D. 2014). As he believed that revolution is to embrace, he seemed to start an

inner revolution, embracing other religious ideas, from where the Catholic resistance was obstructed by the wall of reality.

### 5.3. Conclusion

[Park Chung Hee] imprisoned me because I opposed the State. But I loved him. I also loved Jeon Duhwan. You know, we should soothe a ruler if he is brutal. We just say that is not it and that is not it. During the fifth republic [1979-1987], people might think that I would stand against the authorities. So, I was widely blamed for doing nothing. Seriously [...] there is no reason for me to do that. Hey, I love [president] Roh Taewoo, too. (Jang I. 1990, 396)

Jang Ilsoon often said that he loved Park Chung Hee who inflicted harm on him and his family. However, his youngest son, Dongchen, commented that he could not understand what he said about Park Chung Hee (Jang D. 2014). In Jang Ilsoon's thought, love can be another word for resistance, at least not for forgiveness. As noted above, his life was a series of acts of resistance within his socio-political context. But in his later years he sought to embrace even targets of his resistance. In a way, it might be said that there is religion behind such a change.

Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter, it is now possible to conclude that there was a religious, mainly Catholic, influence on his social thought in the process of its development and change. First, he was likely to be both a young educator like nationalists during the colonial era, and an ardent supporter of Catholic educational aims, although it was not brought to light in the 1950s. In religious terms, he was faithful to traditional values of the Church, whereas in political terms, he was a man of decidedly strong views and a dissident being

sympathetic to radical political groups. In this period, he seemed to be intent on pursuing his temporal, or political, success. However, it was an external factor to forcibly change him in the following years. The military junta put him in prison and he returned to his hometown as a mere Catholic communicant. It was also unintentional that he then encountered Bishop Ji Haksoon in 1966. Under the dictatorial regime, he played an important role as a leader of the lay apostolate within the Church. In 1974, the regime's flagrant oppression of the Church brought him to the fore of the democratic movement. In this period, he began to apply Catholic resistance to the socio-political sphere on the basis of his understanding of Catholic social teachings. However, as he himself stated, in 1977 his inner conflict began to emerge with respect to the current social movement in which he was involved. As the spectre of authoritarianism went around in the socio-political sphere, Jang Ilsoon began to earnestly and critically reflect on the nature of resistance.

Taken together, there can be found three significant interacting aspects: 1) Jang as an educator, 2) Jang as a social activist, and 3) Jang as a Catholic. While he loved the school that he established more than anything, his educational aim was different from nationalists' one. Rather, his Catholic belief was more closely linked to his educational ideal. As a desperate attempt, he ran for election twice in order to remedy the educational situation. But in turn, his vision and fervour placed ideological constraints on him and his people. For him, the Church was the only place to be free from those political and ideological constraints. Within the Church, he actively engaged in the farmers' movement and the lay apostolate on a foundation of the social teachings of Vatican II. Despite the fact that he as an activist involved himself in the democracy movement in the mid-1970s, he acted within the Church and its Catholic social teachings. Although he is often compared to St Francis due to

his image in last years, this study cautiously suggests that he is similar to Dorothy Day, who lived in obedience to both the Church's teachings and Christ's love.

In the previous chapters I have focused on how Jang's social thought was shaped and developed in his socio-political context so far, by examining how his thought interacted with religious ideas and practice. Now in the subsequent chapter I will examine its possible contribution to the Church in Korea.

## Chapter 6

### **Jang Ilsoon's Socio-Religious Thought and the Catholic Church in Korea**

One of the most crucial points to emerge from the previous chapters is that Jang Ilsoon's thought in relation to his socio-political surroundings was fashioned by different religious, mainly Catholic, experiences and ideas. For the Catholic Church in Korea, such multi-layered interreligious or ecumenical characteristics appear to be controversial in the divisive or exclusive religious landscape of Korea. The last national census shows the number of Catholics as 3,900,000, which is 7.9 percent of the population (KOSTAT 2016). This figure is approximately a million less than recorded in the previous census in 2005. In addition, a recent survey indicates that only 11.8 percent of the respondents have positive feeling to religious groups in Korean society (Jogye Order Institute 2015). Such statistics obviously show the sharp decline in official membership of the Catholic Church in Korea. Indeed, Pope Francis reminded the Korean bishops on their Vatican visit in 2015 that the Catholic Church in Korea was established by the laity. He visited Korea in 2014 for his first Asia visit because of the unique history of the Catholic Church in Korea. However, in reality there is increasing concern among Catholics whether the Korean Church can restore its position, or sometimes respect, in the public sphere. Another question is whether the thought of Jang Ilsoon, who was a prominent but little-known Catholic activist and thinker can speak to the Church as to its problematic circumstances. In this

conclusive chapter I discuss how Jang's thought can contribute to the reality of the Church in a broad sense. The chapter begins by looking at the religious implications of Jang's thought in a religious way, weighing up the religious strands discussed in the previous chapters.

### 6.1. The Religious Implications of Jang Ilsoon's Thought

Although it is acknowledged that Western and Eastern religious influences coexist in Jang's thought, there has been a tendency to illuminate his belief from one religious perspective. For Jang, each religious thought harmoniously exists rather than merges in a doctrinal sense. More specifically, as we have seen in the previous chapters, he was inspired and influenced by three religious ideas related to his particular surroundings and socio-political context. He could completely internalise different religious worldviews without contradiction, for he put more weight on praxis than theorisation or philosophical analysis of the reality. In short, his ideological centre of mass changed over time.

Despite this, it is unsatisfactory to highlight the influence of certain aspects of indigenous, Eastern religion, such as Donghak, Daoism and Confucianism without exploring the influence of Catholicism on Jang's thought even though its inclusiveness has been roundly criticised for being syncretist mainly by the Church in the religiously exclusive sphere of Korean society. Although his son, Dongcheon, questioned this interpretation, it can be seen that his thought was influenced by the particular religious philosophy of his surroundings. Thus, the implied criticism of the

religious identity of his thought can be considered somewhat invalid and is based on the reciprocal exclusiveness of religious groups. Especially, within the Catholic Church in Korea there has been no interest in some Catholic features of his thought thus far; and there has been a marked tendency for the Church to depict him as a syncretist, absorbed in Donghak and Haewol, due to the fact that public attention was only devoted to his connection to Haewol.

The starting point for understanding his thought is in its harmonious inclusiveness, not its specific religious identity. This can be found in his conversation with a feminist theologian, Jeong Hyeongyeong:

Jeong: Then, is there no contradiction between what you have learnt from Buddhism and that from Catholicism?

Jang: The matter is that any religion can be systematised, get rid of its content, and be ruined [...] Then, when Jesus meets the Buddha, they hold each other and call each other brother. There are no men and women of all ages. Nothing can block them. Life is dead when it is blocked. Why do we stop each other? When we try to be together and clear what has blocked among religion one by one, religion will keep alive in the future. But, when we say our religion is unique, that is a sin. (Jang I. 1991 cited in Jang I. 2009, 168)

In a way, this might cast doubt on another association between Jang's thought and religious pluralism. In his last years, he often insisted on breaking religious barriers on the grounds that a common religious aim was life. For him, an attitude or related worldview could be an aspect of religious spirituality (Jang I. 1992 cited in Jang I. 2009, 209) In this vein, he sought to identify religion in terms of its spiritual aspect rather than its particular doctrine. For this reason, he believed that religious teachings could not contradict or conflict with one another. This has an important implication for remedying the matter of exclusivism or religious bias, which have been rampant in the Church in Korea. Since the mid-twentieth century, Korean society has become a multi-religious one, and in particular, since the 1970s, the

Korean Protestant Church has grown dramatically and this has seriously caused religious discord and hostility in society because religious groups, especially fundamental and doctrinaire Christian ones, have treated each other in a competitive and inflexible manner. As Jang's thought suggests, what is now needed is to start an ecumenical dialogue on spiritual aspects of religion to heal the fractured society.

It is also worth noting that it is rather limited to spell out his thought in a doctrinal framework due to its unsystematised theological dimension. This ambiguous religious identity can be problematic and an obstacle in both the ecclesial and the pastoral scene of the Catholic Church; and is perhaps why the Church still denies his significance as a Catholic thinker.

Despite Jang being a Catholic communicant, he was not interested in propagation of his Catholic belief, yet he was known to study Haewol's philosophy, write calligraphic works about his teachings, and actively propagate it in his last years. Haewol's teachings may have been too abstract and in fact this tendency was generally found in Donghak; its founder, Suun's teachings were both shamanistic and pedantic. However, while Haewol's were still metaphysical in many ways they were also rather practical, and his philosophy, as previously mentioned, was also socially radical and revolutionary. Jang's propagation of Haewol's teachings could have been his way of warning the fractured society in the vortex of democratisation and the Olympic Games in the late 1980s. However, a question arises as to whether a discourse of resistance in the late nineteenth century can be applied today. In the mid-1980s, political democratisation was achieved and materialistic values encroached upon Korean society, thus Jang's use of a century-old discourse of resistance did not attract public attention. Since then, some resistant and revolutionary aspects of his thought have been veiled by his disciples so far and it is presumably deliberate.

Jang Ilsoon's family and disciples, whom I met in the summer of 2014, appeared to disagree to a large extent with any ideological, chiefly leftist, interpretation of Jang's thought. Primarily, this can be explained on the grounds of the external factors, such as ideological narrowness and anti-socialist attitude, which have been deep-rooted in the social and political spheres of Korea since the Korean War. For more than half a century there has been a general presupposition that politics is ideology. Jang's life and thought were also not free from such social conditions, although it has been conceived of as being related to religion. After the liberation in 1945, he had the same view as left-wing nationalists and progressive groups (Kim Y. 2014; cf. 5.1). In turn, he was forbidden from social and political activity by the military junta and became a scapegoat of politics, which was founded on ideological division and conflict. This circumstance was changed slightly under the military regime led by Jeon Duhwan in the early 1980s, as Jang Dongchen remembered that Jang Ilsoon felt relatively free from political oppression (Jang D. 2014). Despite this, over the past twenty years there has been no study on him as a dissident or as a progressive activist. There can be several possible explanations for this. Indeed, as noted earlier, only his life and thinking in his last years have been highlighted. But more importantly, it is known that he wanted his disciples to work in the co-operative movement rather than in politics and his last wishes were to do nothing with his name. For that reason, keeping a distance from ideological conflict in the political scene has continued on purpose among his followers. In a way, this appears to show that Jang and his disciples seem to have had a distrust of politics after his political challenge had failed in the 1950s. He was known to have rejected several political requests and dissuaded his disciples from leaving Wonju and entering politics when he was relatively free during the 1980s. Despite his lack of direct engagement in a

political life during his own lifetime, resistance is the most important tenet of his thought, and his praxis is obviously shown in his everyday life and relationship with *minjung*. Thus, his thought needs to be explored to assess the extent to which it can be relevant, particularly for *minjung* in the pastoral space of the Church today.

Pertinently, Jang's Catholic resistance in the 1970s can cause the same type of controversy. As seen in the previous chapter, in a practical sense, the Church's resistance, which began in Wonju, had a different paradigm from existing ones. Political resistance emerged earlier than a theoretical approach or theological analysis. Indeed, the Church led the anti-dictatorship movement, and Jang and the Wonju diocese were at the centre of resistance. As discussed in chapter 5, such a paradigm shift was successful because Jang and Bishop Ji Haksoon had a clear aim and object of their movement, and they reacted to social problems in terms of pastoral work. The Church's pastoral work is based on Christ's salvation work. The Korean Church accepted this principle and extended its scope of salvation in the 1970s. Vatican II's concept of the people of God was an ecclesial or pastoral response to repeated requests from the modern world for social salvation. Jang, as a leader of the lay apostolate also believed that a pastoral aim of the Church was *minjung* (the masses) through his whole life. However, this pastoral tendency was weakened due to the influx in the mid-1980s of the mainly conservative middle class (Jang D. 2014). This led the Church to defocus its pastoral concerns, thus in his last years Jang often criticised for its change. Indeed, his thought mainly deals with the importance of the ordinary and spirituality found in the everyday relationship so, in this sense, the transmundane was not his main concern, yet his primary concerns were still *minjung* and the ordinary. From the late 1980s Jang seemed to be highly critical of mainstream religion, which emphasised the afterlife and its soteriological difference and

uniqueness, for he realised the temporal significance of enlightenment in *Seon* and the importance of the here and now suggested in Haewol's teachings. This critical or far-sighted view of religion can be seen by some as a religious limitation of his thought. Hence, the Catholic Church still conceives his thinking as insignificant to its pastoral space.

Apparently, there are still several significant implications of Jang Ilsoon's thought for the Church, which proclaims the 'nearness' of the reign of God in the complex, exclusive, divisive social context of Korea (cf. Küng 2001 [1967], 54ff). In the remaining part of the chapter, I seek to examine how the central tenets of his thought can possibly contribute to the Church in a practical or pastoral way.

## 6.2. The Pastoral Implications of the Ordinariness

As discussed in the previous chapters, the most distinctive features of Jang Ilsoon's social thought are resistance and ordinariness. Here I examine the implications of his idea of the ordinary in the context of the Catholic Church in Korea. Briefly, Jang focuses on the significance of the ordinary in a religious sense under the influence of Haewol and *Seon*. However, in the history of the Church the ordinary has been considered as being insignificant. Since the Middle Ages, the Church has conceived of the ordinary as the profane and its faith and tradition as the extraordinary, that is the sacred. In this vein, it tried to separate itself from the temporal power in the social and political landscape and the clergy and the laity according to its hierarchy. In this sense, it is not an exaggeration to say that a dualist

worldview has been dominant in the Christian tradition, which distinguished the sacred and the profane and the ordinary and the extraordinary for centuries. Such an ecclesial tendency can also be seen in the history of the Korean Church, as already noted in chapter 2. The dictatorial authoritarian regimes came to an end in 1987 and Korean society seemed to achieve democratisation on the surface. After ending socio-political activism led by the Church and its leaders, the Catholic Church's primary task was to provide pastoral or spiritual guidance to the faithful who returned to their everyday life in the political vortex. The Church chose an easier path, rather than to educate the faithful again and to organise the lay apostolate groups for social change. As previously mentioned, in the first phase of history of the Catholic Church in Korea, it was led by the laity from social minority groups. For the authorities, the laity seemed to be focused on the afterlife yet the Church's teachings were condemned as heresy and dissent. However, there was a flow of the missionaries with extraterritorial rights and the Church began to rely on the external power and to defend the status quo instead of maintaining the spirit of resistance and reform (cf. 2.2.1). During the first half of the twentieth century, the Korean Church's experience of persecution led it to strengthen the principle of the separation of church and state and cultural contextualisation. As a result, the faithful became after-life oriented in terms of their faith and this tendency had been dominant for over a century except for during the 1970s (cf. 2.2.1). As the Church became steadily reactionary in social terms and conservative in theological terms from the late 1980s, the church elite began to emphasise the ecclesiastical hierarchy and express a power-oriented characteristic, using the pretext of the Church's growth and social stability. As the Protestant churches rapidly grew, the Catholic Church also pursued its hidden pastoral aim for materialist growth ideology. Thus, social evangelisation that the Church had boldly

proposed was pushed down the priority list of pastoral ministry due to the influx of an ‘opportunistic and individualistic’ middle class (Kim H. 2016, 327). In the 1990s, while the Protestant churches turned their social dynamics, which had lost an orientation, into overseas mission and lay ministry training, the Catholic Church lost its chance for pastoral change and its social position was weakened in the public domain. Such actualities of the Church can be explained in various ways, in the light of Jang Ilsoon’s thought, the reason is that it has lost its roles and pastoral spirituality in ordinary life. Simply, this does not mean that the Church cannot afford its social roles anymore.<sup>20</sup> Rather, it continues to put more emphasis on its tradition, authority and materialist values than spirituality that emerges from a pastoral sphere in relation to the faithful’s ordinary life (Park I. 2012, 120ff).

Jang Ilsoon’s thought is usually called a philosophy of life (Hwang D. 2014). It not a systematised theory or philosophical analysis about life and existence but a form of life. Haewol’s idea of *sicheonju* underlies Jang’s attitude, or sympathy as his disciples have viewed, to the ordinary and reality, as shown in his life (cf. 3.2.1; 3.3). For him, this can be religious spirituality (Sheldrake 2012, 5). As discussed earlier, for him the essence of religion is an attitude towards ordinary life, but the Church after the 1980s appeared to lose its spirituality from his understanding of religion. Jang’s thought suggests how to observe the perennial issues of the Korean Church in contemporary Korea from a different angle. Today’s Church often judges itself by considering social or structural constraints, his thought proposes that it has to begin with a reflection of ecclesial or pastoral essence. In his thinking, the spirituality of the Church begins with the reality of the faithful, in other words its pastoral

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<sup>20</sup> The Catholic Church is still the most trusted among religious groups in Korea (Jogye Order Institute 2015).

understanding of the mystery of salvation and liberation is revealed in the here and now rather than on the sacred and extraordinary, such as its tradition or the Sacrament. In order to read the faithful's ordinary life and surroundings holistically, the Church needs to accept the fact that pastoral ministry is essentially based on the work of Christ. Traditionally, its pastoral aim was to provide spiritual care to devotees in the belief that the ordinary is the profane. Thus, pastoral ministry was to invite its devotees to the mystery of salvation through the Sacrament and to let them experience and live within this mystery. However, pastoral ministry focusing on the ordinary is to discover the mystery of liberation and salvation in everyday life, as Jang found the Buddha-nature in a blade of grass.

Pertinently, there can be a pastoral metaphor in the everyday life of the faithful, which the Church has neglected. An ordinary life is not a space of perfection or abundance but one of imperfection or deficiency. Traditionally, pastoral workers have cared for a spiritual deficiency but they have to look after a social and relational deficiency in the contemporary world. Today's Church needs to have a pastoral aim to accompany the faithful who try to manage in an ordinary space of a deficiency in a spiritual and social way. Like modern Catholic social teaching, the Church's pastoral ministry has to be founded on the nature of human beings in a biblical sense. Human nature is social and communitarian. As seen in God's creation of human beings, the Church exists in the temporal world for 'the formation of social unity' (GS 32). Indeed, in his analysis of 284 encyclicals, Schuck pointed out that the essential tenet of those papal documents was community (Schuck 1991 cited in Greeley 2000, 123f). In the light of human nature, the Church has supported its role as a community in the Christian tradition. Vatican II proposed the idea of the people of God as the Church's communitarian role in interreligious terms, but the Church's communitarian role is to

embrace the faithful from several different dimensions of social class in Korean society.<sup>21</sup>

As for ordinariness, pastoral ministry in ordinary life is to help the faithful to restore the nature of human beings in terms of society and community. As noted before, the ordinary has been destroyed in Korean society. As Jang Ilsoon confronted a devastating ordinary life in his time and place, the Church has to resist what destroys human nature although it is usually rather social or political. In essence, the role of pastoral ministry is to engage in the harsh, lacking ordinary life of individuals and communities, as Jang Ilsoon states that there is the gospel in relations (Jang I. 1990 cited in Jang I. 2009, 151). If the Church wants to restore its social position in the social sphere of contemporary Korea, it needs to stop the theological and pastoral inertia, having separated the sacred and the profane, or the ordinary and the extraordinary for centuries.

### 6.3. Jang Ilsoon's understanding of *minjung* and its implications for the Church

According to Kim Jiha, Jang Ilsoon's favourite disciple and once dissident poet, every movement and activity in which Jang took part needs to be observed in terms of his relations with the masses, for it is the central premise to consider him as

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<sup>21</sup> In his 1971 apostolic letter Paul VI suggested how the Church could apply its teachings to the context of local community. 'In the face of such widely varying situations it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyse with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church.' (OA 4)

‘an activist among *minjung*’ in order to understand him (Kim J. 2000 cited in RMG 2004, 184f). This was a common view among interviewees and interestingly some interviewees often used *mincho* rather than *minjung*. They confidently labelled Jang as ‘one who lived with *mincho*’ and as ‘a friend of *mincho*’ (Jeong I. 2014; Kim Y. 2014). Indeed, these two terms literally have similar meanings in a broad sense. The term *mincho* refers to the grass roots and it usually denotes people who have a tenacious hold on social and political life. Presumably, their perception is placed in the background of which Jang’s disciples prefer this word. As discussed in chapter 4, Jang attempted to highlight the social and ontological metaphor of grass (*cho* in Korean) in his calligraphy works. For him, *cho* has a tenacious existence regardless of its conditions, such as time and place and it is depicted as being enlightened and divine in a religious sense. His understanding is rather similar to the general conception of *minjung* in the 1970s when Jang engaged in social activism, and that will be discussed later in the chapter. For those who went through a period of resistance with him, such a terminological preference can be explained on the grounds of the development of the conception of *minjung* in Korean society. Indeed, *minjung*, which also means the masses, is a more complex and widely used term, but its conception has varied according to the changing socio-political context of twentieth-century Korea.

Under Japanese colonial rule, *minjung* was used by both the ruling classes and oppressed ones. The Japanese colonial government called the oppressed *minjung* and equally, Korean nationalists used the word for a collective subject of independence. However, this tendency was changed in the liberation and ideological confrontation period (1945-48). Leftists began to use the word *inmin* for the people, whereas rightists and the USMGK continued to use *minjung* on the basis of an existing idea

that the ruling class had used it under colonial rule. Like this, *minjung* remained as the language of the establishment, thus its connections with resistance and dissent were severed. Overall, *minjung* referred to the passive oppressed and collective subject of the status quo until the Korean War (Lee N. 2014, 163ff; Hwang B. 2009, 114ff).

Furthermore, in the post war period anti-communist ideology was added to the concept of *minjung*, so that it became the dominant word for the masses. In ideological terms, *minjung* was conceived of as a collective subject of liberal democracy against North Korea's communism, and in social terms, it was still an object of enlightenment or 'disorganised aggregation' for the elite (Hwang B. 2009, 121). In the 1950s, Jang Ilsoon, as an educator, engaged in social activism because he was convinced that education was the most important thing to do in the post war period. His thinking appeared to be similar to that of the elite and intellectuals. However, Jang already considered *minjung* as a subject with great potential instead of an object in a political sense.

It was the April Revolution, generally regarded as *minjung* revolution, that triggered the emergence of the social dynamics and political potential of *minjung*, and its victory over a corrupt and brutal regime in 1960. Since then, it has been acknowledged as a subject of resistance rather than the ignorant masses but this view was only shared among intellectuals (Lee N. 2014, 164; Hwang B. 2009, 124). For the worse, the 1965 military coup turned *minjung* into a mere object of authoritarian and economic populism. After the coup, Jang Ilsoon was unintentionally associated with *minjung* in a geographical and social sense. In a way, that might have been a blessing in disguise. Although the social perception of *minjung* regressed in the 1960s, Jang developed his thinking on *minjung* and applied it to the reality of the local context within Wonju and the Catholic Diocese of Wonju. His thinking was derived from

*minjung*'s demands in his surroundings. Also, through his encounter with Bishop Ji Haksoon, whose pastoral aim was *minjung*-oriented, he sought to foster social spirituality of the laity in the diocese, which was the equivalent of *minjung* in terms of ecclesial hierarchy. It is thus significant that locality and religious extensity deepened his understanding of *minjung* in the 1960s. For him, *minjung* in Wonju and the laity in the diocese could not be separated. He seemed to trust in *minjung*'s potential underlying social reform, which he seemed to believe could be realised through the lay apostolate in a pastoral way.

As noted before, in the 1970s the concept of *minjung* began to have current meanings and images. In brief, it refers to 'the oppressed who are socially and politically isolated and those who are able to lead social reform in order to replace an existing social and economic elite' (Do H. 2013, 442). As Jang Ilsoon had already recognised in Wonju, *minjung* as a subject of change and reform had been widely disseminated. Particularly, progressive Protestant groups began to develop the concept in a theological way from 1971 and in turn *minjung* theology emerged. This new theme of *minjung* resulted in Protestant groups' engagement in reality and their theological reflection on social resistance and independent participation. Although the concept of *minjung* in the 1970s continuously emphasised political resistance and its independence, it was different from that in the 1980s, which was severely inclined towards Marxism and leftist ideologies. During the first half of the 1980s, activist groups sought to redefine the concept of *minjung* in order to face the perennial issues in economic and structural terms. Like this, *minjung*, such as farmers and labourers, became revolutionary subjects within this ideological conflict. During the 1970s and 1980s, for Jang Ilsoon, the difference among *mincho*, *minjung* and the masses was meaningless because he learnt that the Marxist paradigm, which divided *minjung* into

the proletariat and the bourgeois, had become invalid. For him, what is significant is religious spirituality, which exists in the essence of these words. In the 1970s an understanding of *minjung* was clarified in a social sense, thus it signified the poor, the oppressed, the exploited and the marginalised. In the same vein, Jang conceives of *minjung* as a metaphor of ‘the least’ (Matthew 25.40).<sup>22</sup> This led him to believe that God is among *minjung*. Finally, Jang’s understanding of *minjung* is similar to the concept of *ochlos* (the masses) in the Gospels, in some ways. It has both a social, political, economic and strong religious meaning. Indeed, *ochlos* shows various attitudes in relation to the work of Christ. In the Gospels, *ochlos* welcomed Jesus, tried to follow him, often criticised him, ran away from him, and ultimately claimed his death. In this regard, the concept of *ochlos* shows that humans are subjected to God’s salvation plan despite the fact that they are sinners (Seong J. 1989, 218-221). Jang Ilsoon also focuses on the social and religious meanings of *ochlos*, unlike *minjung* theology’s general, or ideological, understanding. In his thought, *minjung*, as sinners ought to be considered as a subject of salvation in terms of the religious aspect of *ochlos*.

Indeed, the Catholic Church in Korea has misunderstood, neglected or treated the idea of *minjung* in a theologically exclusive manner (cf. Park M. 1994). Although the Church has conducted so-called special pastoral ministry for socially distinct groups such as hospitals, the military, or prisons, it does not seem closely related to any social and pastoral implications of the concept of *minjung*. In essence, in Jang Ilsoon’s life and thought *minjung* is depicted not as an object but as a subject and a realistic existential being. In pastoral terms, the faithful can be a subject rather than an

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<sup>22</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ (Matthew 25.40)

object of salvation. For pastoral workers, the faithful as realistic existential beings need to be observed as an existence living in the history of the here and now. For today's pastoral ministry, Jang's understanding of *minjung* implies that the Church is required to grasp both actualities of the faithful, and historicity in order to treat them as a subject of salvation in reality. Recently, Pope Francis has critically analysed pastoral workers' attitudes and identified them as 'practical relativism' (EG 80).<sup>23</sup> The social elite has viewed *minjung* as an object to be enlightened in contemporary Korea; the ecclesial elite has viewed them as an object to be taught. Again, if *minjung* are accepted as a subject of salvation the Church should make a desperate pastoral attempt to represent their reality, and seek to empathise with what they experience and how they feel. In this regard the pastoral aim of today's Church is not to make the faithful expect a better future but to enable them to experience the spiritual mystery of liberation and change in their here and now.

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<sup>23</sup> Pastoral workers can thus fall into a relativism which, whatever their particular style of spirituality or way of thinking, proves even more dangerous than doctrinal relativism. It has to do with the deepest and inmost decisions that shape their way of life. This practical relativism consists in acting as if God did not exist, making decisions as if the poor did not exist, setting goals as if others did not exist, working as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist. It is striking that even some who clearly have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions frequently fall into a lifestyle which leads to an attachment to financial security, or to a desire for power or human glory at all cost, rather than giving their lives to others in mission. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm! (EG 80)

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown the way in which Jang Ilsoon's thought was shaped by three distinct religious ideas, *Donghak*, *Seon* and Catholicism, and how he interacted with his surroundings in the socio-political context of twentieth-century Korea. During the mid-1950s and the late 1970s, his life and thinking were under the umbrella of the Catholic Church. In the 1960s Park Chung Hee's dictatorial regime forbid his social activities, thus the Church was the only place where he could meet and teach people. He was known to be Bishop Ji Haksoon's companion and served as a leader of lay apostolate. He also engaged in farmers' movement in order to apply the Church's social role into disintegrated rural communities. In the 1970s his Catholic resistance was derived from his internalisation of the legacy of Vatican II and in turn he played a background role with ecclesiastical groups in the anti-dictatorial movement. This shows that he lived in obedience to both the Church's teachings and Christ's love.

On the other hand, in his later years Jang Ilsoon seemed to distance himself from the Church to some extent. As the Church's pastoral aim was changed from the mid-1980s, he focused on the teachings of Jesus rather than the doctrine of the Church. At the time he was deeply inspired by Haewol's life and teachings and his interreligious aspect was noticeable unlike before. In Haewol's philosophy, Jang found the value of the ordinariness and co-existence, and he learnt sympathy for

*minjung* from Haewol's life. Also, through the distinctive concept of Buddha-nature and historicity embedded in *Seon* he realised the social meaning of religious enlightenment or salvation, which led him to reflect existing paradigm of social activism. For him, this attitude can be defined as '*mosim* (serving)' or 'creative participation' in a practical sense (Jang I. 1989 cited in Jang I. 2009, 77ff). He also identifies '*mosim*' as religious spirituality, thus in religious terms 'creative participation' begins by breaking down the wall of religions on the basis of his spirituality. Returning to the question posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that the Catholic Church's influence on his life and thought, which has been neglected over the last decade, was significant, and it is necessary for the Church to restore this socio-religious spirituality. Here I review the findings and suggestions in this study.

In July 2014, I conducted an interview with Jang Ilsoon's youngest son, Dongcheon, while he was staying in Cambridge as a visiting scholar. After more than a four-hour interview, he said: 'There are what we [the people nearest to Jang Ilsoon] want to remember and what we have to remember. Also, these are different from one another' (Jang D. 2014). From Wonju to Cambridge, the interviewees differently recalled and interpreted what had happened in the events relating to Jang Ilsoon. Particularly, biographical facts in primary and secondary sources were sometimes at variance with one another, thus I tried to verify historical events from other historical sources. Their memories for one who harmonised diverse ideas without a contradiction are filled with apparent contradictions, as Ri Yeonghui (2006) observes. Further, their various interpretations of biographical events were carefully examined in the socio-political context. In particular, memories and opinions about his last years

were various and often conflicted but this study tried to understand them on the basis that his thought was changed and developed due to his surroundings. In this way, reconstructing such fractured and contradictory memories and various perspectives was attempted. I tried to trim and hem shattered memories and scattered sources in order to relocate Jang Ilsoon in his historical surroundings. This preliminary work has provided an important basis for an accurate reading of his thinking and life, which have been veiled, inflated, and biased to an extent, since he passed away in 1994. In this way, contextual backgrounds for the study were established in the first chapter to scrutinise how his thought changed and developed in the social and political context of twentieth century Korea. This study sought to highlight this context, in which the historical events characterised his life, and to verify it by the material and interviews.

It is generally acknowledged that Haewol's philosophy underlies Jang Ilsoon's thought, more precisely in his last years. As discussed in the third chapter, Haewol introduced the radical principle of equality to the public domain in the late nineteenth century on the grounds that all things are interconnected. As a leader of a dissident religious group, political and spiritual resistance relative to human nature was the basic tenet of Haewol's thought. Jang seemed to focus on the latter in his last years. The more he engaged in resistance that had gradually developed from a personal perspective to a social one, the clearer he understood the subject and object of movement. Like Haewol, Jang also had sympathy for *minjung* and their ordinary life (Park M. 2014), and in his later years focused on them and community, both of which were fractured and had disintegrated as a consequence of economic crisis and political division. His solution was resistance based on the ordinary, beyond the obsolete paradigm of political and ideological activism. The fourth chapter critically traced his understanding of resistance and its connection with the societal value of *Seon*'s

enlightenment. In *Seon* practice, its basic ideas are that the mind is the Buddha and that the ordinary mind is the way. Therefore, it is aimed at realising that all living beings are the Buddha. For Jang, there are no differences between enlightenment and a movement. The subject and object of enlightenment and of movement are the same.

This research has tried to look at the possibility of Jang's social spirituality based on Haewol's resistance and *Seon*'s enlightenment. It can be seen in the acceptance of the value of *minjung* and their ordinariness, unseen in the social and historical context of modern Korea. This acceptance is his religious spirituality.

This can also be found in the interaction between his thinking and the Catholic Church in Korea, as discussed in the second and fifth chapter. Indeed, in tracing the biographical facts, various features of Jang Ilsoon as a Catholic have been identified that existing studies have failed to specify. These features are the influence of the Church and its social teachings in Jang's life and thought, when he was an educator in the 1950s, a leader of lay apostolate in the 1960s, and a political activist within the Church. It was a turning point when he met Bishop Ji Haksoon in 1965, who had been inspired by Vatican II. Under his influence, Jang could understand and internalise the social roles of the Church developed from the legacy of Vatican II, and was always at the centre of this pastoral experiment.

In this thesis, my main focus was the way in which he developed his thinking and applied it to the reality. His basis for political resistance was the Church and his ideological basis was Catholic social thought, thus I have conceived this as Catholic resistance, the essence of which is *minjungseong* (the spirit or quality of *minjung*). The way he conducted social activities changed from 1977 and a new religious dimension seemed to be added to his thinking, however, the central themes of *minjung* and the ordinary, remained the same.

In the final chapter I sought to tie up the various religious strands present in his thinking in order to examine how they may contribute to the reality of the Catholic Church in Korea. It is apparent that *minjungseong* has gradually receded within the religious sphere of Korea, especially in the Church. This reality seems rather disappointing in a way. However, a possible explanation is that there has been a deep-rooted ideological prejudice against the concept of *minjung* in contemporary Korea, as discussed in the final chapter, thus this feature was overlooked in the social context and denied in the religious one. In this regard, existing accounts of his life and thought have presumably highlighted Jang's connection with the co-operative or ecological aspects of his thought in order to gain social and religious acceptance. This study has found that there is an intimate connection between his thought and distinctive religious ideas: *Donghak*, *Seon* and Catholicism. Particularly, Jang Ilsoon's life and thought as a Catholic have been ignored so far. The Church, which has proclaimed new evangelisation and social evangelisation, needs to listen hard to a growing request for social spirituality as much as for its boasting spirituality of martyrdom.

In line with these pastoral suggestions, further research is needed to account for Jang Ilsoon's thought from a Catholic perspective. He is known to have been inspired by Vatican II, thus took an active part in the ecumenical movement. During the 1970s in the diocese of Wonju Jang and Bishop Ji led the ecumenical movement including the Catholic Church, local Protestant churches and Buddhism. If more material and evidence can be collected from other religious communities, a study on his understanding of ecumenism could be carried out.

The history of modern Korea demonstrates that religious communities have been at the heart of civil society and played a significant role in the socio-historical

context. As seen in Jang Ilsoon's life and thought, the Catholic Church in Korea has been credited for its dedication to the weak in the public sphere from the 1970s. However, it is likely that its social role and domain have reduced as a result of materialist values and political bias. The present study on Jang's thought and life suggests that the Church needs to change its paradigm in order to fulfil its social and spiritual role in the social context of Korea. Again, his thought challenges the Church whether to choose to be a messenger of the salvation work of Christ or to remain a 'bystander' in the pastoral sphere of the rapidly changing Korean society (EG 171).

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## *Interviews*

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Kim, Yongu, Interview by author. Wonju Hanal School, Wonju, Korea. June 13, 2014.

Lee, Gyeonguk. Interview by author. The Muwidang Memorial, Wonju, Korea. June 10, 2014.

## APPENDIX

All the Korean names mentioned in the transcript are in the Eastern order.

1.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Professor Hwang Dogeun

Setting: conducted in Oriental Medical Industry Development Centre, Sangji University, in Wonju, South Korea on 9th June 2014

Interviewee(hereinafter H): What would you like to hear from me?

Interviewer(hereinafter B): Firstly I'm curious to know how you met your wife. In general we don't count a nephew-in-law as a near relative. (Hwang is Jang Ilsoon's nephew-in-law)

H: Actually I didn't know her backgrounds. When I was in the third year of university, I taught an evening school in Uijeongbu and I was playing a leading role there indeed. In Uijeongbu there were many female workers of textile factories. My friend fixed me up with one of her friends and I had a little crush on her. This is how I met my wife first. But what I only know was that her father was a head teacher. I didn't know her family background. At that time I was in a student activist group and had taught the evening classes for several years. I didn't know much about her until I got married to her. Honestly I didn't even heard about Jang Ilsoon.

B: The head teacher you mentioned, is he Jang Hwasoon (Jang Ilsoon's younger brother)?

H: Yes, he is. All I knew was that Jang Hwasoon was the head teacher of school where Bishop Ji Haksoon was chairman of the school board. It just happened like this. I didn't know Jang Ilsoon after marriage indeed. When I introduced myself to him, he was just sitting. When I obtained PhD in Physics after marriage, I was 28 years old. Originally I was supposed to work at POSCO in Pohang but my wife wanted to teach Daeseong High School in Wonju. I thought it was strange for her to go to Wonju because she received her MA in Seoul. I didn't know that Daeseong was established by Jang Ilsoon. I didn't know anything really. Then my wife went to Wonju. Pohang

was far away from Wonju. In fact, before that, I had applied for a teaching job at Sangji University in Wonju and sooner than expected Sangji University offered me the job. Finally we had to live in Wonju together. But we couldn't find a place to live because it was unexpected. So we lived with the in-laws for about eight months until we found a house. And there was Jang Ilsoon's house right across my in-laws'. By the way, at that time, the university had problems in relation to the University Foundation. As the council of professors was formed, they drew me into their movement. There was no class due to demonstrations so I frequently went to see Jang Ilsoon. When I saw him, he gave me a cigarette and let me smoke in front of him. (In Korea it is impolite to smoke in front of their elders) I reckon he liked me because I was his nephew-in-law and all of her nearest and dearest were as close as family. The reason is that Jang Ilsoon was imposed restrictions and pressed officially. So his brothers stuck together to protect their brother. Jang Ilsoon has three brothers and one sister. He is the eldest one among brothers and my father-in-law is the second eldest. This four brothers had significant influence in Wonju at that time because they worked with Bishop Ji Haksoon. Especially there was fellowship between Bishop Ji and Jang Ilsoon. I'll tell you about Bishop Ji later.

Jang Hwasoon worked for about 28 years as head teacher of Jingwang High School and its chairman was Bishop Ji. People say Jang Hwasoon was Bishop Ji's right hand. Jang Sangsoon, the third, went into the theatre and gave a lecture on the cooperative movement all over the country. The youngest worked as director of PR in MBC Wonju which Bishop Ji had set up. Four brothers devoted themselves to community movement in Wonju. They have 11 children in total and my wife got married first among them. But as I told you I didn't know anything about her family. I was a catechumen because we got married in a Catholic church in Uijeongbu. When I moved to Wonju, I received the warm welcome and kindness from Jang Ilsoon because my wife was the first to be married in Jang's family. When I saw Jang Ilsoon, he spoke to me much, for three or four hours sometimes. I just remember a few, especially he told me about Daeseong High School. Do you know the story of Daeseong? He hardly mentioned Daeseong to others. It was a heart-rending story. (Prof Hwang told me the story but wanted me to make it as off the record.)

H: I don't think he disliked Park Chung Hee so much humanly.

I devoted myself to the council of professors so I told him about the university and protests. Then he told me not to put on airs and gave an account of what was happening in prison. It was about how much his comrades were arrogant even in prison. In Chuncheon prison political prisoners were jailed with petty offenders so one of his comrades complained why they were put in the same place with petty criminals and asked for treating them as a political prisoner. Jang heard that and said, 'What is the difference between you and them, you idiot!' After he told me this story, 'You should remember this when you fight for something, activists easily become arrogant and begin to reckon they are different from others, then you are resembling people whom you are fighting with. You must be careful.' This is the first story I can remember.

Many things happened in relation to Sangji University. Kim Munki visited Jang Ilsoon and Jang treated him with kindness actually.

B: Your colleagues didn't like you, did they?

H: Yes, they did. I went through hard times. Campaigners thought what the hell he was thinking?

B: I was told many years ago one person who spent sabbatical at Lancaster mentioned Jang Ilsoon in his memoirs about Sangji University. I don't know much of the story. How can I understand this?

H: Chairman Kim Munki continued removing and appointing professors as the situation became worse. Five colleagues were dismissed. It was not on purpose but to ease backlash of the professors. Jang Ilsoon was the only person whom Kim Munki could count on. And Jang was nice to him. But if you want to understand this you should know the fact. In the late 80s Jang was entirely different from before. To understand him you should know this. Why Jang accepted him, I think, Jang tried to change him to run the university because Jang also managed the school before and Kim aimed to manage school. But can anyone do like Jang when the whole world pointed the finger at someone? He didn't behave like ordinary people.

B: How can I understand that?

H: Before that, there was an example, love your enemy like Jeon Duhwan.

Regarding Sangji University, a number of professors visited Jang but to me their behaviour was disgusting. So I told Jang about them because I was a young professor. But do you know how he reacted? 'Son, anyone can rest in the shade of a tree. Don't

nitpick. They are just tykes. Do you reckon I don't know that fact?' Nothing to say. But he was different when he was younger. He changed.

When we take part in the anti-government movement, the cunning tend to shilly-shally and not to stand in the front line, on the other hand the innocent usually criticise and confront the harsh realities. If they are challenged, their spirit of resistance can be shown. Many true activists have femininity, not masculinity. They feel compassion for the weak but fight over fixing problems. But cunning people look on a movement as a game and pushing and hauling. They are fake. By contrast, a true activist rush towards the wall and an empathetic person charges towards the opponent. Jang Ilsoon was that kind of person. When the empathetic engage in a movement, that happened in the end they leave alone. Jang Ilsoon was typical. All his comrades fled and he left alone. He couldn't stand the social wrongs and fundamental problems. He told me he cried with helplessness so he flung himself at the movement. Warm-hearted people is so. They can't hate humanity due to the fact that they are empathetic.

In 1974 Wonju turned upside-down because Bishop Ji was sent to prison by Park Cheonghee. Later Bishop Ji went to offer his condolences when Park Cheonghee was dead although those around Bishop Ji tried to dissuade him. Who suggested that to Bishop Ji? I think it was Jang Ilsoon. Bishop Ji even went so far as to visit Jeon Duhwan when he was in the Baekdam temple. Jang and Bishop Ji already reached that kind of level. What Park had done was wrong but in terms of the essence of humanity Park is only human. Jang didn't detest the human essence but resisted what was wrong, not cowardly. This is a possible solution to our society now. He taught me this through our movement against Sangji University. So now I become a fence sitter by others. I'd fought against the university but in reality Kim Munki came back to the board of the university. By fighting and resisting we can't deal with the problem. As we only fought, our group have split up. We can say Bishop Ji and Jang are unique in this manner. Jang also was labelled as a fence sitter in the late 80s. It's because he always told activists not to be snobby. So they got wrong but in time people found he didn't do in his interest. We can't simply blame him because all his actions are not self-interested. He lived an intense life in fact. I reckon we need to consider that. Those who blamed him are rethinking now. There was something or other. In terms of Buddhism it's the *hwajaeng*. As our society are poles apart, the third way, a grey area, or the diversity disappears. So people are looking for a grey area. But if

we find the grey area solely by self-interest, that is not grey. It's like, when all the colours mix together we can get grey.

Fundamentally we can say Haewol's thought formed the basis of Jang's thought. In Jang's house there are two pictures hanged in the wall, of Haewol and of his grandfather. I reckon Haewol was in the grey area of the history of Donghak. Jang knew Haewol was a fence sitter and compassionate and warm-hearted. Haewol made over two million followers for 30 years carrying his bag all over the country, at that time Korea had a population of around 10 million. Haewol won people's hearts and minds. Every time I met Jang Ilsoon, I could feel the pain he endured and an effort to overcome the extreme ideological confrontation in our society. In reality he was torn between those ideologies and finally he came out of it. He severely criticised our side and embrace his opponents. He took great pains to do this. It's never easy. I can call to mind this.

But for me, it is difficult to steer a via media unless we've got kind of energy. As you know, in our society there are very few people who take the middle way. If we want to overcome complete schism between people in our society, we ought to hold out our hand, but it never happened. Jang and Bishop Ji were concerned with this before anyone. They'd strove for democracy and held out hope that it would change. In 1980 the massacre took place in Gwangju by Jeon Duhwan and his military clique. Jang and Bishop Ji deplored that, but they forbade Wonju to move against the military regime. It's not understandable even if we know their history of resistance.

Anyway, we must consider that point. It's not because they were weak, or rather brave. But what he did in his later years is very confusing. It was very difficult for ordinary people to do so. We might forgive someone or other but it's not easy to explain in fundamental respect. But in reality Sometimes I heard people saying he's changed and he's a reformist. I was very upset actually. People don't want to speak about this but I won't stop. I reckon there is something about him. It is related to the question what should I do then. This is sort of my mantra, from these images of Jang Ilsoon...

B: As far as I know, there are so few Jang's writings left.

H: There are some when he wrote in his early years.

B: As far as I can see, he didn't leave almost any writings so later his followers always say following his attitude to life is important.

H: What's the reason he didn't write?

B: For the political reason?

H: Yes, that's right.

B: As far as I can see, there hasn't been a satisfactory effort to rethink his thought or the procedure for revealing his unknown writings for two decades. Is this because of his followers?

H: I doubt that. His followers weren't kind of learned people. They were just ordinary people.

B: What I'm a bit worried is that their memories of Jang might be distorted.

H: Could be.

B: People could have a wrong idea of what he said or each people might interpret that differently. Don't you care about this kind of possibility?

H: There are some who were close to him and they could write. As you know, Rev Lee Hyeonju, Kim Jongcheol, in fact Kim doesn't know Jang well but he eagerly wants to write a critical biography, engraver Lee Cheolsu, Prof Park Maengsu, and me. I also really want to write about Jang. But we can't do readily.

B: How come?

H: In fact we've planned to write the critical biography in the 20th anniversary of Jang's death. So we visited Rev Lee Hyeonju but he suggested us to leave as it's been and not to hurry. Other people also stepped back and a professor at Yeongnam University tried. But he couldn't. He rushed into doing only with a piece of information purely academic without sufficient communication with others. So some said, 'He isn't capable' and then he stopped. There are people who know Jang better than him so nobody comes forward now.

B: That is what I am anxious about.

H: You don't need to be worried. Your work is different. Write as you see. So we decide to let it go. I can see his followers won't write anything or couldn't because their burden becomes heavier. We just leave people to write a biography or a book from this year and it will be open. Only we can do is to provide information. I reckon we have collected 80 or 90% of information, which are on his activities, photos, paintings, calligraphy, and its backstories. We'll release them, off our hands.

B: In reviewing my work, people easily consider him as a guru or a mystic because we haven't got much academic information about him and he's out of the public eyes.

H: Could be and we're worried about that. Some capable among his followers can't write about him, this can be a reason. But you know why? Jang himself wanted not to

be shown so his true followers can't do anything. Is it strange? Unless we follow him by living, it is hard to write something. To be honest, I gave an interview to Green Review and regretted. In fact I couldn't tell him a real story because he told me we were out of time. What's worse, Kim Jongcheol didn't correct it. That is our matter of concern. There is nothing for it but to go, I mean, the first generation. Kidding but no kidding.

B: I'm also worried about that because I want to know more.

H: What you've recorded and what you will hear from his followers would be sufficient. We have 80% of information because we've heard plenty of stories. So don't worry. From now what you should do is to write as you see and feel. We don't care which point you focus on. We just give you information we hold because we ourselves can't write about him. So we often say in jest, 'What can we do if he will be a myth?' 'Nothing.' (he laughed) We just help and give information as it is.

B: For seven years after he'd passed away, his followers told not to do anything. Did they mean no commemorating?

H: It was a burden. Because Jang himself said that. He wasn't well-known. Over time more people visited his grave but no one could start. This is the characteristic of our group. It is hard for us to start although I've done many.

B: Then what kind of efforts do you put these days?

H: We do actually. After the 20th anniversary the scale of what we've been working becomes large and national. The biography will be published before long and *Muwidang*(the most famous pseudonym of Jang Ilsoon) memorial and a co-op hall will be built. Also, a big cooperative like Hansalim began to study his thought. We can say this is the second phase. The 20 years we've held end now. No one knows where it goes but it goes somewhere. What we can do is to collect information and to provide it. Also, if we need to work together, then we will. As an academic I'd love to study his thought. And another group must be practical, who leads a life together. I believe these two are essential. Eventually we imagine that in Wonju this will be realised. This also is my dream. The city where the co-op movement is well-organised and where Jang's life reflects. So I wrote for the summer issue of Literary Criticism, which is about the co-op movement from 2001. We've carried out commemoration project and restored the local co-op movements in Wonju. As a result, Health Co-op, University Co-op, Culture Co-op, and the network of the co-ops set up over last

decade. One is practice and another is theory. All right then, let's have lunch and take a breather.

B: According to Lee Yeonghee, Jang harmonised different thought like a melting pot. If we understand Jang as Lee does, it seems likely originality of Jang's thought will be ignored. Most of scholars sees his thought as synchronisation of Confucianism, Buddhism, Zen and Donghak. What do you think his original idea is?

H: Jang never felt tied. In fact, he just stayed at home and met people so he was highly intelligent. He studied a lot. He had the Eastern classics so we can easily find the verses he liked in his calligraphy and paintings. Most of them are about Buddhism in particular. so I studied Buddhism and joined the monastic order for a short period to understand his thought.

Also, he told me about quantum mechanics and loved to talk about various topics. Later he talked Donghak, but we can't say he solely stuck to Donghak. Rather, he liked Haewol (Choi Sihyeong's pseudonym). Perhaps he did. We can see this in his calligraphic works. So Kim Jongcheol said Jang unearthed Haewol. As a result, he wanted to follow Haewol from the bottom crawling forward on all fours as Haewol had touched the grass roots. So he tracked Haewol's life and read his books.

Maybe Jang's thought seems like a melting pot. Often, he talked with Lee Yeonghee all night long. Lee was about his age. Lee was a man of integrity and relentless as a scholar. I was told he visited Jang very often. Lee talked about our essence. Don't separate and cut off. It's from Buddhist teaching. The reason for existence of language is to divide and to classify the world, in which we can find everything we have. Jang started a deep conversation with this point so it inspired people. Scholars have theories to divide and Jang perhaps suggests nothing is clear. So Lee was very fond of him. Lee wanted to distinguish good from evil and to point out a problem. But he found hidden depth when he met Jang.

I can remember Lee was singing in front of Jang's grave. When he visited there, he had problems with his legs. He came with the aid of a walking stick and sang there.

B: What kind of song?

H: I don't remember but we've got video. He seemed relaxed, if not, I couldn't have done. He tried not to be logical although he was indeed. Maybe we could say Lee found he was too much biased and felt at home when visiting Jang and Bishop Ji. In

one way, ‘the universe in a grain of rice’ is not Jang’s idea. That is Buddha’s teaching in Avatamsaka Sutra, ‘The whole world is in a tiny particle.’

Jang Ilsoon performed *bapjesa*, a rite enshrining rice, because rice is the universe.

Can you do that? But Haewol did. The essence of his thought is that everything in the world is a gift from the universe. So gyeongcheon, gyeongin, and gyeongmul, Carl Sagan has the same idea. Everything in the world makes us. Indeed our origin is a gift, which is made by mysterious work of the universe. There are a lot of pioneers who realise this besides physicists. Haewol’s teaching is this, everything is precious because the myriad things are the gift of the universe. So he practiced the three bows to a bowl of water, which is the product of the universe. My mother also did. And he told not to beat children. They are born to you but they also are the product of the universe. His behaviours show the origin of enlightenment, which is possessed by the whole world. For example, when I lived across Jang’s house, one day it poured down and the grass grew very tall in front of his house so I was cutting the grass not to wet his pants. Then he said, ‘Have you raised it?’ (Hwang laughed)

I felt a bit confused. I was young so I couldn’t understand. But later I saw his painting the grass and people under it, saying humans who are inferior to the grass.

Later Jang used *ilcho*, a grass, as pseudonym. He also talked to the grass. ‘I feel embarrassed by seeing you’ After all, Jang believed that the myriad things are the gift of the universe. One aspect of his character was to respect everyone regardless of how good they are. This kind of idea is deep-rooted in him. In fact people say his thought is integrated, but I think every single thought in the world is founded on one idea, which means there might be no difference because we see the same world. The universe and natural phenomenon are unchangeable. I reckon it hasn’t changed since the period of Jesus or Buddha. We humans have seen the same things in history and people can find almost the same enlightenment. But only one thing is different. It is about humanity.

I’ve thought about what Jang’s thought is. The core of his thought is that he sees what comes from life, so I see that his thought is philosophy of life. Whatever ideology we have, the human species can also become extinct. So the thing is how we treat our contemporaries with respect. What is Jang Ilsoon’s thought? I can say, treat them with respect. What he always told me is to treat people visiting Wonju with kindness. In fact, he had dinner three or four times a day to see visitors. After all, the core of his thought and ideological mix can mean that he was not at all leaning toward any

philosophy or ideology. In other words, treat our contemporaries or neighbours with respect and kindness and the world won't be like this. That is what I felt. You tell me his thought has unity. Jang said that human beings are the worst in the world but you should live together. And crawl forward on all fours and go long-distance, which means not to stick to certain ideology but to go into people's life and share our thought. For Lee Yeonghee this point seems different and he felt free from ideology. So sometimes I don't know how to understand. (Hwang laughed) One day Jang talked about Haewol and another about Jesus. I'm not sure if he went further but mentioned a lot. As I told you he didn't remain in any ideology, it would be difficult to spell out his thought. Anyway, when seeing or reading his writings and calligraphic works, most of them are the endeavours to show their interior mind.

Let's talk more about Lee Yeonghee.

B: When I read articles about Jang, they say that his thought is a mixture of Eastern religions. My research is to systematise his thought in the light of ecotheology so I'd like to know if there is originality of his thought.

H: I don't know everything but I can give information, which I've collected and lectured at *Muwidang* school. It's just what I've thought about him.

B: I came to hear that.

H: One of his pseudonyms is *cheongang*, which means washing off the agony in the river. He himself said this. Washing off the agony and hate he ever had in the river. After that, he used *muwidang* and his works were different. In the late 80s he used it in general, which is from Daoism and looks nice. (Hwang laughed) But practically I see his thought is in. *Ilsojja*, a grain of rice, and *ilcho*, a grass. (showing Jang's calligraphic works) Why don't we look some works in the period of *cheongang*? Then his works were quite ordinary and he used technique. It is the 70s when he engaged in the movement. I can see that he tried to do better at that time. Have a look at this passage. This is his mind in his early years. He wanted to do better or achieve something and when failed got distressed. At that time he was just a calligrapher so I don't think his thought was deep. It's just only my view. Have a look at this orchid. I can see he kept trying to be honest.

However, in the period of *muwidang*, (showing Jang's photo in his early days) he looks good like an elite and his wife, too. (showing me his last years' photo) He used *muwidang* from 1981. His calligraphic style became softer.

(showing Jang's calligraphy) *mowolsan*(母月山), write like this. It indicates Mt Chiak(a mountain across Wonju), which means embracing with maternal affection. So he told us to treat visitors well. That is what I learnt, so I've done as I said.

*Mowolsan*, I think this is the important concept in his thought. Warm-hearted, actually it seems that he doesn't have thought. In fact Kim Jongcheol said, it was his thought and he was illogical. But I don't agree with him. Anyway his calligraphy changed after using *muwidang*. I don't think that he wrote to show his works. Indeed he wrote freely as he liked.

Bishop Ji and Jang gave all actually. If I sell resources for a price, I'll get lashed when I meet them. (he laughed)

I think there was a distinguishing characteristic of Jang Ilsoon. He gave his calligraphic works only to people who asked. I was poor at figures and never calculating. Anyway before he died he wrote to people whom he'd never given.

B: People who received his works, did they sell them at high price?

H: There were some. When Jang wrote calligraphy or drew orchids, he repeated to get the best one. Then some of his followers collected these studies and sold them with a fake seal. So we told him about this. Do you know how we replied then? He said, 'Just leave them to make a living.'

All these concepts are the same and linked, 'the universe in a grain of rice,' 'the universe in a worm' and 'the universe in a grass' Across the ages and in all countries of the world these are universal.

(showing a photo) This photo was taken when Hansalim(one of the largest coops in Korea) was set up in its beginning. Do you know Hansalim? Now their sales are over £1.8 million and its members are 420 thousand.

B: Of course, I'm also a member. (laugh)

H: Read what you just copied. (showing a photo) Park Jaeil was involved in the co-op movement here in Wonju. This photo was taken in 1987. They had a drink piling up bags of rice in Jaegidong, Seoul. They all were mad. Do you know what happened in 1987? As massive pro-democracy protests were growing, they opened a rice shop. Do you think the shop could be successful? They sold eggs and rice. They were short of money so people in Wonju helped them. Jang also helped by selling his works. Do you know why? Nobody was interested. They sold eggs and rice. For now it can be praised but at that time? I don't think it was easy.

B: How about now? The relationship between Hansalim and Jang Ilsoon? I don't suppose they still regard Jang as a founder and an important person in their history.

H: Definitely not.

B: I looked for their website but I couldn't find a story about Jang. It's all filled with Park Jaeil.

H: When they were in trouble, they sought help. You know people are the same.

Hansalim grew rapidly after the year 2000 and celebrated the 20th anniversary of foundation in 2007. Then information about Jang was omitted and its founder became Park. But there is a story before that. Actually Park Jaeil was in charge of rural areas in the central disaster relief centre and let's talk about this later. Anyway many people helped Hansalim but when they won success they changed. So the activists in Wonju went to Seoul and suggested a commemoration project but they rejected. At that time I was in my 40s and senior members(Jang's closest friends) expressed their feelings. So I suggested them not to go directly but to start from below. I drove and we went all over the country as Jang's house was due to be torn down because of housing land development. As you know Koreans had(or have actually) an insatiable appetite for property and property market went crazy then. So we started the campaign to protect his birthplace in Wonju and spent 5 years visiting all over the country. So they changed and Seoul changed from below.

In this respect, this year is meaningful. Park Jaeil passed away and Hansalim lost their pivotal figure. They need another leadership. So who is bigger in terms of thought? Jang Ilsoon is. So 500 people of Hansalim visited Jang's grave this time. It was a weekday. Now the family's reunited. (he laughed)

(showing a photo) At that time he went to Japan because the co-op movement developed in Japan was ahead. So when he was engaged in Hansalim he began to use the new pseudonym. Look at these letters. In a way it looks free and it's certainly different. And in 1991 the memorial ceremony of Haewol was held in Wonju, which Jang'd hoped for. (showing a photo) I was told that he cried then. (showing another photo) He looked very sick when his exhibition was held.

As far as I know *ilsokja* was seen in 1987 first. The style of his works were changed and we can see more Korean letters.

(showing a calligraphy work) Have a look at this. 'Always thank the grace of *hanul*' We pray at a table. 'Thank hanul, earth, working creatures, and parents. All these are involved in one routine, one origin, one body, and one group' Actually these are not

Jang's words but Haewol's. I think Haewol's thought is immense but it's simple. Respect our parents and neighbours and our family who shares the table. This is because we all have the same root. 'the universe in a grain of rice' It reflects the foundation of his thought. And his works are very comfortable to read. It doesn't look showing off although he started calligraphy since five.

I reckon his thought can be found in his works, which he gave to his followers freely. So I summarise his thought like this. You know I'm a physicist so I like kind of formula. I think, 'to crawl, to serve, and to be together' To crawl is to be humble, which is personal. To serve is to treat visitors and neighbours well. Also, all creation. Although it is small and insignificant, treat with respect because it's also the gift of the universe. Nothing is useless and all creation is your teacher. To be together is to live together and to do nothing, which is Daoist teaching. He said human beings are the worst. (laughed)

What is typical in Daoist teachings is that nature doesn't recognise good and evil. Humans are too much calculating. Actually there aren't only good people around Jang. He doesn't recognise them. I don't think he didn't know it. (showing a calligraphic work) It says, 'meet people and all creation without calculating profit or loss.'

B: How have you started the *muwidang* school?

H: After the touring exhibition for years, it attracted public attention. But it is hard for them to understand because the majority of his works are in Chinese. Today I show you just some simple works. In spite of having difficulty what he wanted to say, these are inspiring although I don't get all his works. Then we decided to study. Actually we could understand after studying in depth. We might feel mountain after we climb. So the study group is vital. Another important thing is our values. Knowledge is much less important. If we set values correctly, we can go to the end. I reckon the essence of thought is to set our values, which last until the end. So we've been learning him and we completed the 5th class. The basic notion is to live together.

B: Do you conduct the *muwidang* school in Wonju as the centre? or other areas?

H: Some people come from Busan. Now the *muwidang* school is opened in Goesan and the study groups expanded. But they don't use the name of *muwidang*. All over the country alternative movement starts. What is the value of life? More people are experiencing family breakdown, and more people want to escape neoliberalism and the logic of capitalism, which already hit the limit. We don't have to be that greedy

and can live together. The standard of happiness is being accepted by our neighbours, not getting publicity. So the core of Jang's thought is communion with people around us. Is his thought original? I think its theoretical background is pre-existing. But what is different is that it spreads through practice and inspiration. Also we are aware of its possibility of becoming religious. It's because it might develop our sensitivity. So we won't allow that, we should. But we don't know how scholars develop their theory about what his thought is. Anyway this is what I've been inspired.

You know his work about orchid is over 2,000.

B: All these are collected privately?

H: Yes, so when we arrange a exhibition, each exhibit is loaned and has its backstory. Jang wrote what he wished to say in his works. But in a way we can't see him as a calligrapher because he didn't write or draw orchid only for that reason. His mindset was different. He didn't draw or write but say what he wished.

Do you know Bishop Ji Haksoon?

B: I've read about him.

H: Unless you are out of time, can I talk about him?

B: Sure

H: You should know him to understand Jang Ilsoon. Bishop Ji came down to the south when Korean War broke out. Then he studied theology and his friends are Archbishop Yoon Gonghee and Cardinal Kim Suhwan. Among them, Bishop Ji was the oldest. We studied in Rome. When he was studying in Vatican, the Catholic Church introduced reforms. (In Korea) many Catholic priests were from foreign countries. Then the priest offered mass turning his back on the people. John XXIII called Vatican II to reform the bureaucratized Church. The council reformed its doctrine and liturgy. Also, at that time, Liberation theology emerged. Bishop Ji watched all this process and came to Wonju. So later Jang studied documents of Vatican II in Wonju. Actually Jang's communication or relations with the world was broadened with help of Bishop Ji. But Jang didn't (or couldn't) show himself to the public and was behind at all times.

His grandfather was very rich and treated well others. So I think his character is based on his grandfather. And in terms of thought on Haewol. He himself wished to be like Haewol. I felt it in his later years.

B: I'm going to ask you one last question. What do you think of him as a physicist?

H: I'm a theoretical physicist having studied purely physics. When I first came to Sangji University, he asked me what my fathers did. My father was a carpenter. Then, he asked again what the difference is between physician and carpenter and I couldn't answer to his question. He said nothing is difference and it's just a job. You need to think about this more carefully. I think he told me to see the essence, or it's nothing. But I couldn't get that then. You know I am also a KAIST grad and kind of elite. I just forgot what he said soon after that. Because I was busy with my research and I didn't want to be behind my colleagues although I worked at Sangji University. So I started kind of competition. My research area was magnet so I developed the hard drive head. I've written lots of papers and worked very hard. But suddenly hard drive's gone in market, then I realised.

B: Actually by that experience?

H: Probably. All of sudden what I'd done became nothing. I just followed the stream of industry. It seemed meaningless actually. Really for me it was a joy to write a paper and found I was competing for empty things. At that moment what Jang had said hit me. What I was doing was not learning. And after I returned from America I got confused. I was drifting in the system of globalisation and capitalism. The more it develops, the more it disappears. I find that it's specialist's job not mine. Then I had relations with people in local community and scholars. And I took an interest in the nature of how physics views humans and nature. Actually in a physicist's view in spite of the fact that technology can innovate society but Jang knew what the essence is, it's humans. Ultimate is our happiness in community. Do you believe the advance of society?

B: I doubt it. I reckon it's going back.

H: I don't think so. I think it's a problem of both extremes. The more our society develops, the less weak our nature becomes. So I often go to the desert to watch real stars. Actually it inspires me with awe and wonder, not logic. That is the difference from before. My viewpoint becomes wide while trying to see the esoteric. I think he wanted to say that. One day he told me that it'd be fine if you stay here in Wonju but not to remain here.

In reality sometime I'm a bit tired. Many people find me and I feel confused about my identity. These days people talk about consilience but in fact what we all see is very similar. I mean we don't have to distinguish one study from another, rather we need to talk. In this respect I am a physicist and also find the nature of existence through Jang

Ilsoon. In this sense understanding of science and of humanities are the same because they see the same thing. It's just the difference of how they explain it. Luckily I have new horizons through other studies and I don't think it's totally different from what I've learnt from physics. That is my consilience.

2.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Lee Gyeongguk

Setting: conducted in Muwidang Memorial, in Wonju, Korea on 10th June 2014

(no recording of early part)

Interviewee(hereinafter L): Jang Ilsoon couldn't leave any writings by law. If so, it could be read by many and it could put them in danger. He knew this so he just talked. But he couldn't deliver a speech in public meeting and only in churches it was permitted. So most of his talk was based on bible and Catholic faith. Also he added what was going on in the world and how we ought to live.

In the 50th he'd focused on education and its importance. He was a headteacher at the age of 28 and established a school. That is Daeseong and he is the founder. After that he went into politics to change the world. First he stood as an independent in election and next he was the Social Mass candidate. At that time the state maintained its policy for reunification by expanding northward but Jang claimed peaceful reunification. He was accused of being communist due to this and imprisoned after the 1961 military coup. They sentenced him to 8 years but did time for 3 years in Seodaemun and Chuncheon. He was released in 1963 and he couldn't do any activities by law. So he was engaged in farming and wrote calligraphy at home to resolve his deep sorrow. In 1965 the Diocese of Wonju was established and Bishop Ji came to Wonju. Bishop Ji couldn't find anyone who worked with and he met Jang because Jang was Catholic. When Bishop Ji met him, they had a talk and found what they would do in Wonju. In the 60s documents of Vatican II were published. Bishop As Ji had studied in Rome he started ecumenical movement in Wonju, firstly with Protestant Church, which was Jang's idea. He argued the Church should be young so made young adult group. Also, the Church should be independent. Because at that time the Catholic Church was dependent on foreign priests. The Church should be reformed and corrupt society should be changed. In this respect they started the co-op movement, especially credit unions. In Korea the first credit union was established in Busan by a Catholic nun and it spread over the country. In Wonju it started in 1965 by Bishop Ji. At that time people were very poor so couldn't use bank. Jang suggested moving to the co-op movement. Now credit unions have saved over £600 million in Wonju, which never

escape Wonju. It doesn't go to Seoul. Every banks send their money to Seoul in the evening. I believe this money can revive local economy. After the reunification of Germany the co-op leaders entered first. When we come together, we must go first. If capitalists or conglomerates do, they could destroy the future. Back to Jang, he extended the co-op movement over Gangwon province. This was his philosophy. In the 80s farmers sprayed much pesticides. Here in Korea we've used too much that children are taken ill. Because they have it. Let's change food. Jang changed the direction toward life movement. So he started Hansalim in the middle of 80s. In Wonju Jang established and helped them take their direction.

Haewol was the second leader of Donghak, who was arrested near Wonju and was executed. To sum up his thought or philosophy is that heaven and earth are our parents and *bap*(steamed rice or bread) is heaven. Jang was fascinated by Donghak so he studied it a lot in seclusion. But he couldn't present his thinking. In 1994 he died of cancer.

Interviewer(hereinafter B): How did you get to know him?

L: When the April 19 revolution took place in 1960, I was second year university student. I narrowly escaped death in Seoul during protests. After the revolution the country was in a state of anarchy. We students came here to maintain public peace and order in Wonju because the police fled during the revolution. At that time I met Jang and he told us about Gandhi's non-violence. So we did very well. This was the beginning. Then I've served him to date. Many things happened. Actually our relations began when he ran for MP in general election I helped his election campaign. Then I thought he was a very good man. I've got a lot of stories to tell you. During the election campaign, I stayed at Jang's for a month. I saw him sleeping in guest room and every morning he bowed to his parents and washed their chamber pots. Social Mass Party was not influential then. But he was second in election. I did my business and got married a few years after. I also became a Catholic and in 1971 Bishop Ji led the protests. Park Chung Hee underestimated him. Bishop Ji was imprisoned and it sparked a wave of protest and prayer meetings. Park was extremely surprised. In Wonju this was triggered. Jang Ilsoon was always behind and helped Bishop Ji to act. Like this our democracy has grown. Jang continued to do in labour movement and life movement. So there are many politicians who followed Jang. I think what is important in his words is to live together, not to live alone. And the culture of cooperation...

(he paused for someone entered)

He couldn't drink much. But as there were visitors at all times he had a drink with them. In the end he said it was fate when he was diagnosed with cancer.

B: Jang passed away in 1994 and his followers haven't done much.

L: We haven't done anything actually. It's because of his wishes. Don't do anything in my name. In fact for 7 years you can't say we did nothing. He always called someone he liked *japnom*(bastard). So we made a group and named *japnom* group. In his anniversary we got together and 7 years after we started *muwidangsaramdeul*. And I retired and came back to Wonju. Like this we've done these commemorating projects. This year is the 20th anniversary.

B: 20 years has passed. Some of his followers passed away and how do you wish people to remember Jang?

(Lee answered the phone. Wonju MBC are planning to make a documentary about Jang Ilsoon)

L: There are three. We've been thinking about this.

The most important thing in his life is cooperation and life movement. We are hoping that these movements keep growing in Korea. Second, he had profound understanding of Donghak, especially Haewol, so it continues developing. Our mind is important. 120 years ago Japanese came and killed tens of thousands of Donghak followers. At that time we lost our spirit or mind. We have to recover our national spirit. Third, in terms of faith Jang was a Catholic but was beyond religion. God is in us and in our mind. If we keep this, cross doesn't mean penance. There is a way of happiness and that is how we live. He talked such things many times. The movement showing Jesus in our daily life, it's Jesus' love. And live like Jesus. Once he told us to love Park Chung Hee and Jeon Duhwan. I think regionalism must be defeated in Korea. Park had merits and demerits and Kim Daejung, too. They are only humans. This split and conflict culture were introduced by Park Chung Hee. Renew our spiritual culture with communality. This is basic philosophy of Donghak and communal living Jesus said. Jesus is in our mind so Jang tried to find our religious foundation in mind. In fact lots of people became Catholics with Jang's influence. In this sense he was great and lived having faith. In terms of his life movement Eastern thought is significant so he was interested in Daoism. Above all he had a noble personality.

B: How do you remember about Jang Ilsoon?

L: (silence) While I was staying at his house for a month to help his election campaign, I saw how he respected his parents and how humble he was. He just wanted to change the world in a humble way. He could adapt himself to any classes of people so whoever talked with him lowered his head. Really he had a noble personality and a man of his word. That fascinated me actually. There are more than 1,000 credit unions in Korea and its savings in total are nearly £30 billion. Also its members are 6 million. I was a secretary general of the union for 8 years since 1987. After Jang passed away I retired in 1995. Jang wished his followers to work in the co-ops, not to enter politics. I worked with mine workers for 15 years in Gangwon province, where had 2/3 of coal reserves in Korea. Then there were over 10,000 miners and their families. There I spent my youth. Jang sent me there and Bishop Ji told me to fish for people. Jang acted up to his words. For my whole life I tried to live like him. Now I'm 80 years old.

You need to see his world view, religious view, and his philosophy of the cooperative movement comprehensively. Also, his lifelong relationship with Bishop Ji, who was the spiritual symbol of faith then. I presume liberation theology and documents of Vatican II are similar. High walls encircled the Church, now the very same, Jang criticised something wrong in the Church. We all got told off and then he consoled us. There was a lot of human warmth in him. He was a true believer, a great leader, and a pioneer. We've had enough of talking today.

3.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Jeong Injae

Setting: conducted in Wonju Catholic Centre, in Wonju, Korea on 10th June 2014

Interviewee(hereinafter J): Did you see Prof Hwang yesterday?

Interviewer(hereinafter B): I did and I've seen Lee Gyeongguk this afternoon.

J: What about Kim Yeongju?

B: I'll meet him tomorrow.

J: At Muwidang Memorial?

B: Yes, I will.

J: Tell me, what would you like to hear from me?

B: What I'd like to know first is how you met Jang Ilsoon.

J: In fact I'm not from Wonju. Do you know Bishop Ji? In 1972 Bishop Ji called for overseas aid to support restoration of flood damage across the Diocese of Wonju and Caritas Germany and Misereor promised. But Bishop Ji wasn't able to go to Germany due to garrison decree and martial law after a series of university students' protests in Seoul. He could depart in December but when he returned from Germany the flood damage restoration was nearly finished by the state. So Bishop Ji set up the relief and rehabilitation committee and its execute committee in 1973 after much thought. A chairman of the committee was Kim Yeongju. Lee Gyeongguk and Park Jaeil were in charge of mining villages and farming villages respectively. After they investigated with Catholic Farmers' Movement, I joined the committed. I worked as a consultant in farming villages. This was how I came here. In 1985 I served as head of general affairs in diocesan curia.

B: Did you watch Jang and Bishop Ji closely?

J: Not like Lee Gyeongguk and Kim Yeongju, who were close to Jang.

B: What do you think about him?

J: (laughed and hesitated to answer)

B: I presume that a distant person could watch him more accurately than those who are close to him.

J: I wasn't that close to him. I just met him at meeting because the committee was heavily influenced by him. When inviting farmers and miners to educate them, he was a frequent lecturer. I thought he studied a lot and spoke Japanese and English, Also I was told that he knew French. The reason is that he shut himself off after his release from prison. I was told that he grew grapes and wrote calligraphy again. Perhaps he read many books while staying at home.

He was a Catholic but originally his family was Buddhist. After his brother's untimely death, his family converted to Catholicism to fulfill his last wish. In 1965 Bishop Ji was appointed as a diocesan bishop of Wonju. Bishop Ji was in Rome while preparing Vatican II so he watched what had happened there. In 1965 the Vatican established the Diocese of Wonju to commemorate the council. When he came to Wonju, he asked lay leaders to recommend a person to work with him. Bishop Ji wanted to reform the Church according to Vatican II so people introduced Jang to Bishop Ji. Since then they had a close relationship, which was more than a common relationship between a bishop and a lay person. Indeed they discussed everything together.

Many people visited Bishop Ji. As Jang's house was monitored by police, he could meet people in bishop's palace and through Bishop Ji he could form a friendship with labour activists, farmer activists, and dissidents, especially Lee Yeonghee.

B: Bishop Ji passed away before him. How did he react then?

J: Bishop Ji lost his life in Seoul St. Mary's hospital a year before. Jang passed away at home in May 1994. They should have lived longer. They passed away too early.

B: Bishop Ji had a significant influence on him. But we haven't got sufficient information about Bishop Ji. How do you think about him?

J: Well (deep in thought) He was from the north so hot-tempered and outspoken and always cried very easily. But he didn't bear a grudge. And he had been in poor health from he was little so He took a leave of absence from seminary and Archbishop Yoon Gonghee who came from the same place, Pyongyang, finished. Then he returned to Deokwon seminary in Wonsan and he was the oldest student. In 1949 the seminary was shut down by North Korean authorities and he was captured while he tried to escape to the south. Later he escaped successfully with Archbishop Yoon who was a deacon then. He was righteous. The Diocese of Wonju encompasses deprived mining towns such as Taebaek, Samcheok, Jeongseon, Yeongwol. When he made pastoral visits, children painted a river as black. By these experience he opened his eyes to

social issues. He started to give voice to society so he arranged several joint meeting with nuns, priests and lay people. Also, he lived a simple life and was an anticommunist. He wrote a book, *The Communism I experienced*, you can find what I've told you.

Can I digress for a moment? A few years ago a group of young adults in the Church launched a project on Bishop Ji and obtained fund for the state, but now they have insufficient funds because of cuts to the fund. (Presumably current government of South Korea is censorious of the history of democratisation. President Park is a daughter of Park Chung Hee, a military strongman.)

B: Is there any commemoration at diocesan level?

J: There is scholarship programme and a small memorial in Baeron. In Seoul those who worked with him established Ji Haksoon Justice and Peace Fund. But there isn't huge commemoration like one of Cardinal Kim Suhwan because of a lack of finances.

B: To which ecclesiastical province do the Diocese of Wonju and of Chuncheon belong?

J: To the Archdiocese of Seoul. The Diocese of Wonju was originally part of Chuncheon. But it was too small so it was revised. Now it includes part of Hoengseong and Pyeongchang, Jecheon, and Danyang. But it is still a very small diocese.

B: How do you start *Muwidangsaramdeul*?

J: Originally it was a group of people close to him. We called it *japnommoim*. We just got together to booze (laughed) and set it up with me and a secretary at first. He was Park Jungil, a grad of Daeseong school, who was very close to Jang. Now he live in Wonju. I've got his number but he doesn't get together with people. Why don't you try to contact him? That's how we've done. We visited his grave and Lee Yeonghee gave a talk on him for 6 years just among ourselves. In Wonju people part of co-op movement gathered. Then Park Jungil and me thought that if we did alone there will be a limit. We should hand it over to them. Since then, *Jobssal Hanal* was published and it's been expanded over the country. Especially Hansalim, they were indifferent to him actually but by studying their history they gradually had interest. As the co-op movement gained strength here in Wonju people have visited here. And co-op movement network was set up in Wonju. Ever since then the movement has developed. As I told you, so people started studying Jang, led by Hansalim. As the interest grows, cooperative fundamental law legislated in 2012. Because the year

2012 was international year of cooperatives. Then many people visited Wonju and they came to know Jang Ilsoon, how Hansalim was established, where it is rooted, and who is the mainstay of it.

There have been some dissertations on him but no PhD thesis ever. They wrote about his thought of life in terms of child studies and calligraphy. In fact we were considering how to archive documents, a student of Yonsei University sorted them and wrote dissertation. Later a person of National Institute of Korean History read this dissertation and scanned them. So these are preserved in Baeron archive now. Since then he's visited Wonju very often and wrote thesis on the co-op movements and the relief and rehabilitation committee in Wonju. (he showed the thesis)

B: Is it the one published recently?

J: Have you seen this?

B: I did yesterday. This might be a last question. How do you want people to remember him?

J: Kim Yeongju is a good speaker and fluent in Japanese. So he's connected Catholic Farmers' Movement, Hansalim and credit unions to natural farming co-op in Japan. Now he is over 80. Lee Gyeonguk takes charge of *Muwidangsaramdeul* as chairman and actually I didn't want to do but now I'm chief director. It's time to hand it over. I don't like to show myself to the public. In fact I hardly ever give an interview. Wonju KBS is making the documentary about Jang and the co-ops in Wonju. They visit me regularly. A few years ago there were much information but now those are preserved in Baeron archive. So it's not easy to access these documents. Actually I don't want more documentaries. But I can willingly help those who carry out research. We should pass the baton to the next generation.

B: How's it going?

J: This year we hosted national event, opening debate and visiting his grave. Now young people should do this. (silence)

How long do you stay in Korea?

B: I'm going back next week.

J: You'd better meet people as many as possible. We are only a small portion of people who met him. Jang wasn't a professor or in such a position, to put it bluntly, we lived with the people. It's helpful for you to meet various persons.

4.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Kim Yeongju

Setting: conducted in Muwidang Memorial, in Wonju, Korea on 11th June 2014

Interviewee(hereinafter K): What is special is that Jang drew calligraphy and gave them to people. Perhaps those are over 2,000 works. This means Jang gave his messages to people through his calligraphic works. These are relevant not only to them but also to others. Most of them were from Eastern Classics. We can get his thought by studying them. These includes Mencius, Confucius, Jesus, and Donghak, which were vital to those given his works. We can see a clear correlation between them. There are some books about his stories. Although these are fragmentary we can also find what he thought of. You'd better read, collect and analyse them as much as you can. This is why research on Jang Ilsoon won't be easy. If he left writings, it's easy. But there isn't. It's a bit uncomfortable to talk about money. You'd better join the membership and you can get a bulletin every three months. It doesn't look special but you can get hints for your research.

Interviewer(hereinafter B): How did you meet him?

K: (he laughed loudly) We are from the same place. I am also from Wonju. He is 6 years older than me.

B: Then were you close to him from your early days?

K: He ran for MP in general election and I helped his campaign. But I couldn't even go to his side because he was 6 years older than me.

B: When Jang entered politics, how did his friends and relatives react?

K: Originally he was an educator. He established middle and high school and ministry of education controlled school then. He need to fight against ministry to do what he believed and to reduce pressure on them. So he decided to stand for election, to put it simply, he wanted to protect his school and to realise what he thought about education. But he lost twice. Because at that time very often voters were bribed. In fact he was supported by the populace but he had no money.

B: I was told that he decided to stand as Social Mass Party candidate.

K: After the first election in which he stood as an independent candidate he felt the necessity of party. Then Social Mass Party was known to be progressive so he thought it would be OK.

B: In reality was he relatively progressive?

K: Then Social Mass Party was the most progressive group and he was young. He had reasonable grounds for choosing it.

B: Were they linked to Yeo Unhyeong?

K: Originally they were and Jo Bongam was the leader.

B: Did Jang interact with Jo?

K: I'm hesitant to say Jang met Jo Bongam. I heard he went and heard Yeo Unhyeong's speech. If people force to connect them it can be, but I don't think a young man from the country have something to do with what occurred in Seoul.

B: Can it be said that he was influenced by them in his early days?

K: He wasn't under their political influence in his early years. Rather, Jang was influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's or Albert Einstein's world view. It's different from the lines of Korean politicians. Jang respected Gandhi. People like Yeo Unhyeong? I doubt that.

B: I presume his thought changed after his meeting Bishop Ji.

K: You need to see this. There is no original thought. Nobody's born with thought. I think he tried to find his thought for his life in Wonju and fortunately he did it on the outside. So he wrote a letter to Einstein and heard about Gandhi. In reality he had no choice except to challenge Korean politicians and unintentionally joined the party like Social Mass Party. But it caused him to be imprisoned after the 1961 military coup. In fact the one should have been arrested was Park Chung Hee. Do you know he was a communist?

B: Park Chung Hee? Yes, I do.

K: Park ordered to hunt down communists because of his lack of legitimacy. No communist was found in Gangwon province. Eventually Jang was arrested, who advocated peaceful reunification, whereas the state supported the idea of reunification through absorption. That's why he went to prison. He was sentenced to eight years in prison and served a three-year sentence.

B: Do you know what kind of books he read?

K: Gandhi's writings and a book concerning Einstein's world view.

B: He worked with Bishop Ji.

K: I'm telling you because you graduated from seminary. When John XXIII called Vatican II Bishop Ji was studying in Rome. So he watched how it was prepared and found the way the Church should go. Now Pope Francis is trying to restore that spirit. Bishop Ji endeavoured to realise this spirit of the council in the field. But he couldn't do it by himself. Lay persons must help him. Someone introduced Jang to Bishop Ji so they met. Bishop Ji asked him how he became so progressive. Jang answered he read that kind of books in prison. His wife got those books in English for him and he interpreted for army during the war. He was good at English. That is how they began to work together.

Do you know the ecumenical movement? What they did was the ecumenical movement in Wonju. Bishop Ji supported this and made Jang to do. It's commonly said the Catholic Church is stubborn and old-fashioned but the Protestant was worse then in Wonju. Protestant pastors were stubborn at that time. When we see the documents of the council all these are surprising. They tried to practise this. Bishop Ji told Jang to teach young people, saying he would take responsibility and support him. Jang took the trouble then. (silence and seemed to recall)

Later many thoughtful and prudent young people converted to Catholicism. We can't explain it superficially. You should put together these pieces of information, so you can read resources and ask if you need help.

B: What I don't understand is the reason why he changed his direction from social development to life movement in the late 70s. I can't find an explanation in any books.

K: It can be seen like that in your eyes or those who are adhere to modern studies. But I can say nothing's changed.

B: In what sense?

K: In the late 70s and early 80s we were under the military regime. Nowadays it also seems like we're living in the same time. Do you know how soldiers identify enemy and friendly soldiers.

B: Well, I'm not sure.

K: You served in the army, didn't you? But it's not easy to answer. Simply, those who use a countersign correctly are friendly soldiers. If not, they fire. So if we criticise at the moment there can be more victims. In that case Jang just tried to soften their attitude. Did he change his attitude? If anyone says he did, that person must be stupid. They don't know how to see the world.

B: I can understand that in one sense.

(everyone laughed)

K: Some people just see the exterior and tend to bring superficial judgment. Who is a soldier? To be brutal, they're just bullies. Some activists knew this, so they didn't have to fight like before. Our fight is entirely different.

B: Was Bishop Ji of the same mind?

K: Both Jang and Bishop Ji said we should love Jeon Duhwan. If someone says they changed, that is low level. You don't have to care about such a thing while conducting your research.

B: The reason is, some of people I met say Jang's thought can be separated by stages.

K: Their research is insufficient to assess Jang's thought.

B: I was told that some local residents criticised for how he dealt with matters of Sangji University foundation in his later years.

K: Sangji University?

B: Yes, I was told that the locals put him down as a fence sitter.

K: This is the story in those days. As Kim Mungi took over the university it provoked a protest against him. Then what would happen at university? University is the place to educate. Unless they were able to manage it you shouldn't kick him out. That didn't mean Kim was a good person, rather if someone can do better than him, do it. People said why one from Gangreung took it over but there was no one who could do instead of him. We could throw him out of the school later because only Kim was able to manage the school, he thought.

B: As a matter of fact, this question is irrelevant to my research. But I'm just curious to know why many people have mentioned that issue.

K: Then, you must study and compare information before hearing about him. What you've heard is unilateral. You should see broadly.

Those who were involved in student protests only saw the enemy in front of them. They wanted Jang to support them to defeat their enemy. As they didn't get his support, they put him down as a fence sitter. They were shortsighted so they speak ill of him. (silence)

B: That is important.

K: I am telling you because you went to seminary. What is sacred vocation? It's commonly said but they don't have a clue. It must be human. (silence)

It's boring to talk too much at once. Go to young people and do not make old man talk over and over again.

B: I've asked the same question to others. You'd closely watched him for years. What are you planning to commemorate him after the 20th anniversary?

K: There will be nothing special. You must know this. Some people think Jang's stories and his thought are got patented. But that never happens. We want to support people having the same mind and to be of help to them. We never thought about controlling or limiting them. You shouldn't regard our movement as others'. We just like doing together and sharing what we have as much as we can.

B: How do you remember about him? And what does he want to say in our time?

K: I reckon he's an idiot. If he tried to succeed, he would. But he chose the hard way so his family had to face hardship. How stupid he was! He could have earned money and made the school much better. He is an idiot, isn't he?

B: If yes, I don't have enough to write.

K: Right. I didn't live like that. He did the right thing. We don't have to consider other aspects. He never did anything for his own good. He wrote and gave so many calligraphic works, but his son didn't get any. Hansalim was set up in Wonju, but they removed him from their history. It sparked strong resistance here. Then Jang said, it didn't matter who started if it just worked well. This is Jang's thought. There is a huge difference between his thought and common values. He thought differently. But it's useless to speak about him to those who couldn't see him correctly. So I've told you that your work would be arduous but challenging. You have to see him with different viewpoint. I can say you made the wrong choice.

B: (laughed) I've carried out my research over a year but I am not sure whether I'm doing right. I'm glad I came here in Wonju.

K: You should change your view point to Jang's. If not, you cannot see it. Some people possess his calligraphic works and they're saying they like him. But as a matter of fact more than half of them have these works to sell expensively. (everyone laughed) They don't matter what is written and what is its message. In fact everyone cannot be the same. If we harshly blame them, what can they do then?

Don't come ask me again. (in jest) Go to others. I was told that you've already met some. Those people also know him well and all are very learned. Pop in the office. I told them to help you because you're studying.

B: I appreciate that. Thank you so much for your time.

5.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Jang Hwasoon (Jang Ilsoon's younger brother)

Setting: conducted at Jang Hwasoon's house, in Wonju, Korea on 11th June 2014

(I didn't record while I greeted him and had a friendly conversation)

Interviewer(hereinafter B): Did you come back to Wonju after graduating from Seoul University?

Interviewee(hereinafter J): Yes, I was appointed teacher of Daeseong High School, which was set up by my brother. Bishop Ji established Jingwang Middle and High School in Wonju. He appointed me head teacher of the school. Then I went to Wondong cathedral so he knew who I was.

B: Jang Ilsoon ran for general election twice and for the last time he was a candidate of Social Mass Party(SMP). I've heard, you strongly dissented from what he'd decided.

J: I did.

B: Why?

J: In those days SMP was widely known as communist. A man who ran for election in Munmak was quite famous and he cajoled my brother into joining SMP. It was ridiculous that my brother helped that guy's campaign and I was out on the hustings. That guy was a baddy. He cashed in on my brother and won the election. Jang Ilsoon got up to all sorts of things and we had to make the best of it. I don't understand why he joined SMP.

B: Any other reasons except that? I think he could be an independent candidate.

J: If so, it would have been better. I presume that he thought it might be hard without the party. But he didn't talk to me about that. And he joined the party and ran for election. I was so angry. (in a temper) Every time I think of that...

B: After the election, did your family get in trouble?

J: We got into a mess. (still in a temper)

B: Then how about the first election?

J: When my brother was an independent candidate, the locals said he was promising. But at that time money election was common and we didn't have money. Every time I thought back... (speaking indistinctly)

B: I've read, when he came back to Wonju he was introduced to Donghak. By any chance do you know about this?

J: I don't know that actually. He showed interest in this kind of things unknown to people. So he studied and told people about them. That is the point we could emulate.

B: How was he as a Catholic?

J: He was a devout Catholic. However, he didn't focus on his external faith but on inside. He lived honestly and kept his faith. He didn't like evangelising others. He truly respected Jesus and tried to emulate him. He's never toffee-nosed.

B: How's the relations between Bishop Ji and Jang Ilsoon?

J: Good and very close. Bishop Ji was sincere and modest, never pretentious.

B: When Bishop Ji passed away Jang Ilsoon was struggling against his illness. I presume he was stricken with considerable grief, wasn't he?

J: Everyone was broken-hearted when Bishop Ji passed away. Because he was the true priest. He devoted himself to take care of the poor and the sick. As I was a headteacher I met him fairly often. He was warm-hearted.

Bishop Ji and my brother were very close. I usually talked to Bishop Ji during the day and my brother did at night. He was a respectable man and should have lived longer.

B: Do you remember what kind of books Jang Ilsoon read?

J: I don't know but there are many books at his.

B: I think for his family he was different from what others thought.

J: He almost never made a living and gave things out to others. So his younger brothers and friends helped him.

B: I was told that he changed his character as time passed. But I can't find then documents.

J: When he was young, he was like others, studied and went to school. Usually people find someone generous and knows more in order to ask for advice. He gave them advice.

B: From when did people visit Jang Ilsoon?

J: I'm not sure, but maybe since he was in his 30s.

B: Why did he enter politics?

J: Politics? Then politicians were thieves, so he wanted to rectify the situation. But was it possible? (louder) All of them were crooks. In fact there are very few good people.

B: How do you remember about him as brother?

J: He was a good man. But strictly speaking he had many irons in the fire. (silence)

B: That means a lot.

J: Sometimes he caused kind of trouble which he couldn't sort out. Actually he did good things but people around him suffered the consequence.

B: Now more people get to know him.

J: That's great and he actually did it. He never said he did something and just said so-and-so did such-and-such.

B: Actually I'd like to know how he was a Catholic. Do you remember any verses or stories in Bible, which he loved?

J: Well, he talked much to others but to me he didn't.

B: Thank you so much for your time.

6.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Kim Yongu

Setting: conducted at Hanal School, in Wonju, Korea on 13th June 2014

Interviewee(hereinafter K): In terms of religion, Jang touched almost every religion except Islam. I reckon he penetrated into all and, more precisely speaking, the way of understanding Jesus and Catholic faith. When Pope visited Korea in 1983 he dismissed him. What does it mean? He studied much about Vatican II, which means he knew the history of the Catholic Church. So if we deal with his thought in religious studies, it concerns his religiosity throughout his life historically, his integrated understanding of religion after the late 80s, and Jang as Catholic. Because he was a Catholic for all his life anyway. However, god that he believed in is neither a personal god nor godhead existing outside us. It's like *qi*(spiritual energy) or pantheism. In terms of Donghak it's *jigi*. He said, you are God, which is different from Christian theology. In saying you are God, it can mean God is immanent. I can say he is like Francisco of Assisi. So according to your focus your research can be different, I think. You can hold Christian viewpoint or you can focus on his ecumenical movement with Bishop Ji. So I am asking you on which point do you focus, for example, how he connects Buddhism to Catholic and how he mixes Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity together in his book.

Interviewer(hereinafter B): In fact that is my concern.

K: You don't have to think that is difficult and firstly you should choose your research direction. Maybe some of us can talk to you about Jang Ilsoon, so you'd better choose to whom you can talk. If not, your whole research can become different. You need a kind of guide.

B: I have also been asked similar questions so far. What and how do I write about Jang Ilsoon? But not much information is available. At first I started with those limited resources but...

K: Research gets no better, doesn't it?

B: It does so I came here to find primary sources. First of all I try to find theological contact between modern theology and Jang's thought. But now I'm a bit worried about what I've been doing as I meet people in Wonju. Also, I think theological

approach cannot be enough so I bring Donghak to understand his thought. Actually I don't know Donghak very well. Anyway a framework for my study is modern ecological theology.

K: You'd better read Hwang Jongryeol's articles. If possible, you can see him. Also, Vatican II and Thomas Berry. In Korea Yu Dongsik's or Byeon Seonhwan's works. In fact they aren't directly linked but it'll be helpful.

B: I've never thought about Korean theologians.

K: Among scientists, especially Fritjof Capra, Deepak Chopra, and Leonard Mlodinow, you can read their articles.

B: Actually I don't know them.

K: A translation of *War of the Worldviews*(2011) was recently published. Concerning Buddhism you need to see Zen. Also, the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, *Sinsimyeong*(Faith in Mind), *Byeokamrok*, these are vital. Have you got his collection of paintings and calligraphic works?

B: I've received from Prof Hwang.

K: Anyway are you good at Chinese characters?

B: Not very well. So I'm concerned.

K: There are many wrong translations so it needs to be corrected. You should read the basics, I think. Also, Kim Yongbok who was a chancellor of Hanil University. I published some articles on life theology. It's not easy to understand Jang Ilsoon unless you read the basics. By when do you write your thesis?

B: I've already started writing but don't do the parts in relation to his thought.

K: For Jang, God exists as spirit objectively and humanity is divine due to the fact spirit is in us. Donghak's god is not personal god. In this sense it is different from Catholic doctrine. But he lived as a faithful for his life. That is what I've thought. Do you know samgyeong? gyeongin, gyeongchoen, gyeongmul. He translated it into the idea of mosim. That's it. I don't know what to talk about.

B: How did you meet him?

K: You can find a story in this month's green review. In fact I was engaged in student social movement in Wonju when I first met him. After 1987 Korea went through turbulent era. Wonju was no exception. There was resistance and it was based on dualism such as Marxism, statism, and socialist tendency. In some ways it was based on hatred and rage, so he was concerned about me and asked me to meet. In January

1988 as I remember I saw him. For me he was nothing but a local. Maybe he heard about me from my comrades. That is the first meeting.

B: How was he when you first met him?

K: In fact I'd heard about him in Wonju. So I was careful. As far as I remember he let me sit down beside him, and talked. I didn't listen very well actually I couldn't. Of course I knew he was out of the ordinary. 5 years later I began to understand what he'd said. So I reflected.

B: Did you have any reason?

K: It always comes with internal and external reason. I was a socialist when socialism began to collapse and I found the way my comrades conducted. I asked myself if we really wanted to make society better. Also, I reflected hatred and rage in me and found it went something wrong. After all, I realised I needed introspection and practice. Then what he'd said to me was echoed in me. At that time activist groups didn't do this. Despite the fact that they fiercely struggled and resisted in the name of justice, there existed enmity and distrust between comrades. Anyway there are many painful stories.

B: So were you disappointed in that circumstance?

K: I'm hesitant to say I were disappointed, rather I reflected myself. I also had a critical mind. As communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, I found communism wasn't an utopia. This caused us to rethink our philosophical and economic ground. Then Jang Ilsoon already mentioned life movement. Without the meeting in 1986, it would be impossible. But a couple of years later he passed away. I could meet him only two or three times and I studied for myself. I was an activist and I had such a talent. I've searched all his paintings and works, most of books he mentioned. I changed my way from socialism to cooperative movement and community movement through learning.

B: You were deeply engaged in student movement. I presume it was difficult to sever the relations.

K: (laughed) It was. But I think it was good to change my direction.

B: I think you could choose another way. But why did you choose that?

K: There were internal questions. What is humanity? How should it be our society in the future? First, Marxism threw a question at me and after 1986 Jang's life thought and movement did. And I finally realised.

B: Since then, haven't you had any question or doubt on his thought?

K: I've had actually and I could get here over time by studying. Still I look at things about him.

B: Don't you want to write about him?

K: I did it actually, about life movement and cooperative movement, and how he thought of them. Once I planned to interpret his words, but I quit. Everyone can interpret him as they wish.

Anyway how did you decide to interview me?

B: To be honest, I e-mailed several people before I came to Korea.

K: How do you choose them?

B: First of all I tried to contact those who appeared in Green Review. I read your interview.

K: In fact I am shunning the media. If you google my name, you can read some articles. Also, you can look at my website.

B: What I want to know personally is about ideological leaning of Jang Ilsoon. I suppose he didn't lean toward any ideologies in his later years and he was beyond ideology. But when he was young it might be different. Those whom I met in Wonju told me not to explain him in terms of ideology. Indeed it's unreasonable to divide his thought into early and last phases.

K: That is because his thought... Jang firstly encountered Donghak in the late 40s. And suddenly in the 70s he started mentioning it. In the meantime there was no mention of it but it's only in our point of view. At first his family was Buddhist, then it also can be found in his thought. He learnt Chinese classics, then we can say there is Confucius influence. Thus it's not possible to break down chronologically. Because thought is different from philosophy, which is closely linked to life or attitude toward life. Accordingly, to spell out his thought, it depends on one's capability. In my point of view you'd better approach in this way. You need time to get the point of his thought. Philosophical methods in the West and the East are contrasting.

B: That's why it's so difficult to explain him by using Western methodology.

K: It's because the patterns of studies and life are different. And I see this might cause conflict between the East and the West if they try to match different things.

B: Sometimes I feel I spend my time on a pointless work.

K: So I'm saying you just illustrate him partly. Each can do their own parts and join them to complete it. That's what they said, I think.

B: While I've been reading I can't conclude. Why did he change his direction of movement?

K: You can find in books. There can be many reasons. First, he was not a materialist due to the fact that he was a Catholic. I presume he was something of a populist (or Maoist). In the early 70s he talked about Maoism and made his followers translate Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I see he was not a communist but at least a Maoist. But this is just thinking. Actually he was engaged in anti-dictatorship protests and at the same time was involved in cooperative movement. No one did like that then. He did resist and cooperate at the same time. Jang and Bishop Ji did both, resist a dictatorship and support co-ops. You should see both sides. There are political democratisation, and economic democratisation as well. That's developed over time in Wonju and now the co-op movement gets the spotlight. In the 70s Park Chung Hee was tyrannical. In fact Jang's followers were arrested and sentenced for death penalty. At that time the cooperative movements were set up in farming and mining villages. In the mid-1970s the urban population surpassed the rural one. Industrialisation destroyed agriculture and patterns of life changed. In the late 70s cooperative villages that Jang and his followers had set up were inundated by Chungju dam construction. The most treatment for pesticide induced diseases were provided in Wonju Severance Christian Hospital. He might have occasion to do. Further, the reason like Vatican II and inter-Korean confrontation was complex. In the mid 70s he already talked about organic farming. I don't see it is easy for one joining pro-democracy protest to bring up the issue of organic movement. So many of his followers are involved in community movement. I think you can find this through reading. Of course what I've said can be more detailed.

B: Can we say external factors are crucial?

K: External factors? (laughed) He learnt for himself. Let's get some lunch first.

(had lunch with pupils)

B: I'm not quite sure but I see the present day is similar to Park's dictatorial regime. What do you think of the implication of his thought now?

K: Economic growth is another name of pursuit of desire. That our desire drives us is based on dualism. As a result of this, a tragedy like Sewol ferry disaster happened. A country and local governments agreed tacitly. After all a local government says development all the time. It means we are still hungry for something. In other words

we experience the setback of democracy. I suppose he warned and told us to evolve into new civilisation. There are two key points of what he said. First, evolution through introspection and practice. It can be spiritual progress. Second, I can say social evolution, not progress. It's also fine community evolution. In looking at human history, I think it's the matter of evolution. Can we say we've evolved than in time of Jesus or Buddha? Do humans become more spiritual and divine? No. Then what is our task now? I think Jang suggested many, so I wrote about this. Green review magazine, Hansalim, Return to the Soil Movement, local community movement and alternative education like what I've been doing, and spiritual movement, they seem to work separately but they are linked. Its characteristic is restoration and evolution in my point of view.

Also, I can say the restoration of community spirit.

B: If now someone says let's love (president) Park Geunhye as Jang did...

K: I said so yesterday while lecturing at Indramang school. What Jang said actually means, I suppose, do not protest having mind of hatred. We can criticise and punish them, but love them.

B: Personally that point is hard to understand. To be honest it's easy to hate someone. So that is something we can see in him.

K: (laughed)

B: While I read Lee Yeonghee's book, I found a part about Jang. I quote, 'he is like a smelting furnace melting various thoughts that look different into his thought' Do you think there is something original in his thought?

K: That seems original.

B: You read the books Jang once read. Do you think Jang was progressive?

K: Yes, he was. So he ran for election as a Social Mass Party candidate. On the outside he was progressive but there are the inside and the outside. Sticking to a certain ideology is the outside. He said, love Park Chung Hee and Jeon Duhwan. In this case it's difficult to understand if we focus on the outside. It can mean, hate the sin but love the sinner. It's because we all should live together. We can criticise others at the base of love of humanity. That is compassion. God's compassion toward humanity. In spite of the fact that Jang had progressive attitude on the outside, it's not enough to say he is progressive. Also, some people say he was so good that he told them what they wanted to hear but I don't see he did. In fact he criticised harshly when he saw something wrong. Those who are related still live so people don't

mention it. There are many as I remember. And these left in his calligraphic works. They say Jang embraces all but it's completely misunderstanding. His criticism and advice were based on a premise of love.

B: He's like Jesus as I hear from you.

K: It's because I'm comparing him with Jesus. I think he was enlightened. He's like Haewol. In fact people called him little Jesus.

B: What do you want people to commemorate him?

K: Commemorating and being honoured are different. In a sense commemorating can be idolisation, whereas being honoured is being embodied in our life. Live as he lived. Christianity's idolised Jesus but Jesus movement is to live like Jesus and to be like him. I hope more people live like Jang Ilsoon. This is a movement.

B: Are you saying the current situation is like that?

K: Actually I opposed that small memorial in Wonju. When Wonju city planned to build his memorial, I disagreed.

B: In reality for politicians using his renown seems politically worth it, isn't it?

K: That's their thinking. I hope he remains a friend of the people.

B: He's getting renowned. I was told that KBS's making a documentary on him.

K: They're coming later today. I'm concerned actually. I can live my life following him quietly.

B: Without words or writings, your memories or his real image can be distorted, can't it? Over time we understand him differently.

K: Well... but each person does it right.

(KBS team arrived)

B: How do you remember him?

K: A role model of this life.

B: Of next life, too?

K: (laughed)

7.

Interviewer: Baek Hyomin

Interviewee: Prof Jang Dongcheon

Setting: conducted in Cambridge, England on 24th July 2014

Interviewee(hereinafter J): It is very important what kind of books he read and whom he met. But if I see the book he left, those are not related systematically. He didn't collect or organise books so it's not easy for my family to open his bookshelves. Once a person tried to write critical biography and asked our permission to see the books. Before we sorted all the books, it's too early to make public. Also, his calligraphic works imply his thought. However, these remain in the memory of those who received them although each has its own message. I mean most of works in exhibition aren't systematised yet. He often held exhibitions. I think the works that he wrote for exhibition and the works that he wrote to people on a whim are different. He wanted to show what he thought through his works in exhibition. Of course for audience those works that he wrote impromptu look much interesting but in terms of calligraphy we should separate his works for exhibition from others. Because while preparing exhibition he worked harder and thought more carefully. But up to now there is no consideration in this sense. I think we need to have a critical mind. However, in general people want to see his thought of life or humanism. It's difficult to be considered.

A few years ago someone criticised severely my father's works. I think he may well do this. What to open to the public is important but until now there is a certain format of his works shown. From the time he drew orchid, a topic became rather philosophical. In the 70s he hardly drew the four gracious plants. From the 80s exhibition was held he started drawing orchid. In early days most of works were studies but in 1988 exhibition I was really surprised. It's kind of takeoff for him. I saw he tried really hard to break his barrier.

Interviewer(hereinafter B): Something happened in 1988?

J: In fact he was more stable to study then. In the beginning of 80s during Gwangju democratisation movement he took refuge at my uncle's. After that he began another level of resistance beyond real politics. In the 70s he was engaged in real movement but in the 80s he moved. One day at a table he said conservation of nature is

nonsense, who could conserve nature. To be honest I didn't have a clue about what he said. Perhaps he deeply thought of industrialisation and environment, and the direction of the movements. For example, he was quite negative to reunification movement. He said it was kind of boast. The reason is that constitutionally he didn't like boast. Also, he reckoned internal reunification was more important. Of course he desperately wanted reunification but criticised actual movement groups.

B: Internal reunification?

J: How movement groups embrace the opponent and he worried about students' sacrifice during extreme and violent protests.

B: To which side were they unified?

J: It's hard to speak. He didn't give an answer. He severely criticised North Korean regime. He suffered a lot because of the matter of reunification. In fact his letter to Einstein was about reunification. Realistically he thought such a movement was of no use.

B: Can we say his early idea of reunification changed?

J: Maybe not. In reality he knew there was no more romantic vision of reunification. What was ironic is that many detectives came to see him. People didn't understand such a situation, especially activist groups. He said the same thing to police, what he thought about their ways of life. He also told activist groups not to criticise politics too much because politicians were only humans and they also felt some concern. We should aim to live or act together and shouldn't see all in dualist view. That led activists to dismiss him until the 80s, I think. So I asked him before he passed away. But he didn't give any specific answer. Maybe I did a silly question because there is no alternative solution or direction toward truth. I suppose I did the same answer.

B: It's difficult.

J: You can use currently accessible resources but should be careful to systematise his thought chronologically. There have been ups and downs in politics of Korea so you can't say he wasn't affected. In fact there are two kinds of activist groups, one suffered in the 70s and another in the 80s. Their memories are set by their experience. For my family we were more stable in the 80s than in the 70s not like people often thought. Sometimes people asked me what my father was doing for a living. I knew my father was a farmer and my father could think he was a farmer. Because he actually did something like farming and he considered himself like that in mind. While his reading a book, he wrote memos, which left now. But it's not organised and

he only caught a glimpse of his feeling. Later he wrote them for his exhibition. If I write his biography, two most significant exhibitions are of 1988 and 1992. He wrote enthusiastically and gutsy writings. He expressed his thought in his works because there was no way to do it. In 1992 many works were from Buddhist scriptures and most of their topics were about Zen. In the late 80s he asked me to get Zen scripture of Sung dynasty. Also, he showed interest in Donghak then, especially Haewol's thought. He definitely knew Donghak because one of his friends worked at Donghak centre. In fact he was solely interested in Haewol, not Choi Jeu, and in the idea of *bap*, not Donghak revolution. In terms of Buddhism he was interested in Zen. In terms of Catholicism, in the 70s he had a little interest in liberation theology. If he met someone like Bishop Ji in Buddhism, he could have converted to Buddhism, I think.

B: How was he as a Catholic?

J: He was faithful and made it a way of life. I can say the Catholic Church gives a bit more freedom to laypersons. After Vatican II the Church accepted inculturation so he also did. In a sense he respected formality. In fact when my friends came home he urged them to vow and he did, too. At that time there were many priests having progressive mind but in the late 80s it changed. That's the reason people think Wonju's changed. I suppose he prepared entirely different level of movement than like Hansalim. He didn't like the word ecological movement. He said it seemed too human-centred. This is the difference between the 70s and the 80s.

B: Did he prefer life to ecology?

J: I think he thought something human-centred wrong.

B: Which did he prefer, nature-centred or god-centred?

J: It's not god-centred but nature-centred. But I don't know how to express. I'm not a philosopher. Whatever it is, we should respect or embrace it, I think.

B: This year is the 20th anniversary of his death. How do you want people to commemorate him?

J: That is not what I can answer. In general people want to commemorate as they remember. Who do you respect?

B: Jang Ilsoon? (laughed)

J: Anyway if you respect someone, that doesn't mean you like all the aspects. Neither can you know all the aspects. I think memory can be made after death. What I remember is the image of father but I hope more objective and various image will be made. And we need more interviews with those who were close to him and more

recordings. The thing is that this work is done in Wonju but I suppose there are more people who met my father. Their stories cannot be found yet. If they pass away, the story will disappear. And we concern over a tendency toward mystification or deification. I think the pattern of being popular is typical and some aspects of my father might be unconvinced. All the matters have causes so when we can explain them we can get a new biography close to the truth. Like your research it has its own limit and meaning so if it repeats there will be more complete work with time. It's still a period of transition. We need to think about and organise his life more carefully.

B: You mean more trial and error?

J: Indeed many people remember his empirically so we need more time to understand him objectively. In order to this it is vital to obtain more primary sources but it depends only on oral statement. Generally the thing is that their memories are positive, but I don't mean we have to see him negatively. (laughed) That can possibly make him a person beyond human nature. In fact, he said in his later years he can forgive Park Chung Hee and he has no more grudge against him. To be honest I just watched the protests when I went to university because my family painfully suffered from Park Chung Hee and through guilt by association until the 1990s. In this respect my family cannot forgive Park. My father was arrested three days after the 1961 military coup. My family broke up and scattered actually and my grandmother passed away because of it. My father was heavily influenced by his mother. My grandfather was also died lonely after my father was released. For my family Park's regime threw black cloud but he said he would forgive him. I thought my father was amazing.

B: I heard this story you just told me several times in Wonju but I don't understand to be honest. Was it possible to forgive? Some says it is love for humanity. What do you think of that?

J: Doubtful. (laughed) I don't know and I can't forgive. Love for humanity? In a way he thought it was not worth mentioning. I don't think he tried to embrace Park actively. In a sense he seemed very future-oriented and when he found different value he changed over time, I suppose. He had a dream so he didn't dwell on the past.

B: To be honest I cannot get that.

J: Me neither. But if he didn't, it could be harder. I don't think he is a saint. So he couldn't empty his mind. But the reason he said with confidence is there is something, maybe hope. When I was willing to say this personally, he passed away. I felt sad about my memory of him stopped there. It might be selfish but I needed him. But

personally he guided me already. When I chose my major, he suggested Chinese literature. He bought me a book three times and when I entered university it was the last time. I think he was sort of a family man in a sense. He never told me to study and when my mother said something to me he also said very positively. So I have a memory of that I was happy. His daily life was well-regulated and to me he looked charismatic. Anyway I was brought up in a well-off family. I mean our house was abundant in books. He didn't drink much but lots of people visited regularly. Once he drank and came home, he used to sit me on his lap and sang a song like *achimiseul*(morning dew). And at times he drank and cried. He was very emotional and enthusiastic. Because he had to go through the agony. This was what happened in the 70s. In the 80s the circumstance was a bit different. He put distance from politics but politicians visited him very often.

B: As a scholar of Chinese literature how do you think of your father?

J: (laughed) as a scholar? It was the initial stage when socialist literature was known to Korea, my father was interested in *The True Story of Ah Q* of Lu Xun. Maybe he read it because I saw the book at home. So at first I felt my father was like Lu Xun. He enlightened Chinese intellectuals but later I found I was wrong after I studied him. (laughed) Lu Xun was very critical of his inner world. My father was different. Let us suppose we're going to systematise his thought as ideology and accept it, although my father himself didn't do it, those who accept it academically and those, practically each has different role. I think these must be harmonised well over time. Up until now practical aspects have been discussed mainly. I see it can be different if we accept it academically. As his family what we might help is to provide information, of course my mother was still alive so we can't open all the resources, I think there is our family's role.

B: I suppose there are kind of archives left, which are never opened.

J: Yes, there are very few calligraphic works left. We won't touch them for the time being.

B: If they are open, more active and in-depth research can be carried out. Do you have a mind to open to the public?

J: Personally yes. It should be. What can we do with them? We should donate archives at the most appropriate and safe time. But the calligraphic works are a bit different. Some people asked to show his studies for calligraphic works. And several exhibitions were held. But I don't think those are open to the public although those

have their own meaning. Some people think differently. I think when we cannot track the original works then the studies for his paintings can be helpful. But another important thing is to make bibliographical notes for his calligraphic works.

B: You are sort of professional.

J: I don't know well. (laughed)

B: Chinese characters (laughed)

J: I think those who study Daoist philosophy and Buddhist scriptures could interpret and make notes. I studied modern literature. Anyway I think it is positively necessary for us(family) to take care of his works carefully. Anyway I've talked about ordinary things too much.

B: No, I wasn't able to hear about that.

J: Don't you hear it in Wonju?

B: I think the story depends on who is telling.

J: Right. There are a range of views. What they want to remember or what they have to remember is different. So when interviewing you can find this.