THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT:
TOWARD A CHRISTIAN PANENTHEISTIC PNEUMATOLOGY FOR
THE KOREAN MULTI-RELIGIOUS CONTEXT

by

Eun-Hee Shin

A Thesis Submitted to The Faculty of Theology of the University of St. Michael’s College and the Department of Theology of the Toronto School of Theology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Theology awarded by the University of St. Michael’s College

Toronto 2000

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0-612-54053-7
Abstract

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Eun-Hee Shin
Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Theology, 2000
University of St. Michael’s College, University of Toronto

The purpose of this thesis is to move toward the contextualization of life-centred Christian pneumatology through a dialogue with ki/the Ultimate Ki (Chigi) philosophy that represents Korean religio-cultural sentiments within the categories of panentheism. Ki/the Ultimate Ki is an East Asian/ Korean term comparable to pneuma in Greek and ruah in Hebrew, both of which indicate the Spirit of God in the Christian tradition. The point of studying the Ultimate Ki is to theologize the life-centred aspect of this East Asian/Korean concept, which is perceived to be relevant for today’s life-destroying context of political disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, ecological crisis, racism, sexism, and other social diseases.

“Life-centred” is a particularly important notion in this thesis, since my position is that the Holy Spirit is best understood as a healing, life-giving Spirit for both humanity and the whole universe. Life-centrism is an all embracing term which includes Christ-centrism, God-centrism, and salvation-centrism. Holy Spirit is broadly understood as the ultimate source of life itself. That is, whatever generates true “life” in many other religio-cultures may be identified as the Holy Spirit. I shall attempt to exemplify a way of contextualizing Korean theology by focusing on ki/the Ultimate Ki panentheistic philosophy, which can be a resource for Korean pneumatology, and for the contextual interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. The pneumatological approach is a constructive way of understanding God as the life-giving Spirit, from which significant theological implications can be drawn in relation to a holistic idea of salvation. The basic approach of this work is not to deconstruct Western pneumatology, but to introduce Korean resources for the sake of a deeper intercultural theology.
Acknowledgments

It is always joyful to think of those who have been special to me during the writing of this thesis. I would like to thank my thesis director Dr. Harold Wells, an excellent teacher who has tirelessly guided me in writing this thesis. His theological questions and suggestions have been essential for me to complete this work. I thank Dr. Ro Young-chan, the thesis consultant, who has enabled me to make a number of important concepts clearer by providing some keen insights and criticisms. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Ovey Mohammed and Dr. Marilyn Legge for their support and perspectives. I thank Kim Chi-ha, a minjung poet, whose life and thought has influenced many young minds including that of mine; he is keen on the place of minjung, especially in interpreting Tonghak philosophy. I am also deeply grateful to my friends who have supported my study, ministry, and life in many ways: Rev. Ahn Sang-jin, Rev. Kim Hoon, Hedy Morgan, Margaret Nutt, and Rev. Suh Dong-chun, whose presence and support have been invaluable, especially when I was in despair.

This dissertation is dedicated with love and thanks to my parents, Lee Young-ja and Shin Hyun-woo. Where would I be without them? After all these trying years, I want to celebrate my small achievement with my family and special friends.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to move toward the reconstruction of life-centred Christian pneumatology through a dialogue with ki/the Ultimate Ki (Chigi) philosophy that represents Korean religio-cultural sentiments within the categories of panentheism. My interest in the concept of ki is derived not only from philosophical curiosity but also from my religious experience as a Korean person. I grew up in the Christian church and in a Christian family which nurtured a Christian faith, but it was Christianity which I have increasingly felt needed to be held together with elements of my Korean religio-cultural heritage. For example, when I was young, I witnessed extraordinary things in the shamanist rituals called kut. During the ritual, shamans perform various activities combined with dancing, singing, and chanting for the purpose of prayer, admonition, consolation, and the release of people’s suffering known as han.¹ As a shaman reaches the ecstasy of the spiritual moment, she often becomes able to do extraordinary things such as dancing on sharp knives, or lifting up a huge container filled with hot water with her teeth. Sometimes, the shaman’s voice suddenly turns into someone else’s voice, for instance, that of a daughter-in-law who committed suicide because she did not give birth

¹ Han is, according to Suh Nam-dong, “a deep feeling that rises out of the unjust experience of the people” or a “just indignation.” Minjung Theology (Maryknoll: New York, Orbis, 1981), p. 27; According to Kim Chi-ha, a Korean minjung poet, “Han is the minjung’s angry and sad sentiment turned inward, hardened and stuck to their hearts. Han is caused as one’s outgoingness is blocked and pressed for an extended period of time by external oppression and exploitation”; Hyun Young-hak says, “Han is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustices suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against oneself, a feeling of total abandonment, a feeling of acute pain of sorrow in one’s guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wiggle, and an obstinate urge to take ‘revenge’ and to right the wrong—all these combined.” “Minjung, the Suffering Servant, and Hope,” a paper presented at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 13 April 1982.
to a son for the husband’s family. The shaman speaks and acts exactly like the daughter-in-law and blames the mother-in-law who mistreated the daughter-in-law and the husband who did not protect her. As the shaman criticizes the mother-in-law and the husband on behalf of the dead woman during the ritual, they beg desperately, on their knees, for the daughter-in-law’s pardon. During the ritual, the shaman plays the han-ridden person’s role to heal her han and let her soul go in peace. Such scenes can still be observed in some villages of Korea. Koreans call these shamans “ki-filled shamans,” or “shamans with strong ki” (kissen mudang).

As I reflect on the religious journey of my childhood, I also recall a preacher in a Christian church who exorcised a woman possessed with “evil spirits.” The preacher in a triumphant mood shouted several times, “I am ordering you, Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ, get out of that woman!” A little later, the preacher slapped and shook the woman while shouting, and the whole congregation responded, “Amen, Hallelujah!” After repeating the procedure, the woman let out a scream full of suffering and suddenly became quiet. After a while, the woman awoke as a “normal” person. The members of the church called the preacher “the Holy Spirit-filled prophet.”

Of course, this is an extreme example of an “evangelical” understanding of the Holy Spirit, which, for me, is not the direction I wish to take in contextualizing Korean pneumatology. Rather, such merely soteriological/christocentric pneumatology, associated with exclusive Western evangelical conservatism, needs to give way to a more biblically based and culturally relevant pneumatology for the Korean context. Perhaps, regarding the issue of the Holy Spirit and ki, one more example can be brought forward
here from the minjung (oppressed) movements in Korea.

During the politically intensive period of the 70s and 80s, many students, laborers, clergy, and others were all engaged in a political rally to achieve democracy in Korea. The collective zeal of the people is often felt to have produced a synergetic effect. Some, mostly college students, participated in the Shamanist ceremony kut with dancing and beating traditional drums in order to gain or revive their energy or ki. After repeating the ritual, the people experienced the great energy of ki as present within them. Others, mostly Christians, often joined the "loud-prayer" in which they experienced the immense power of the Holy Spirit immanent within them. With this experience of the Holy Spirit leading them to God’s justice, Christians ran on the dangerous streets of the demonstration without fear. The energy stirred up then became a strong driving force, inspiring the people to march on the street barricaded by the armed military. Since the political struggle was so intense, no one had time either to debate or even to question whether the nature of the Spirit behind the enormous energy was from Shamanist ki or the Christian Holy Spirit.

However, as I reflect on the religious phenomena which occurred in this moment, I must now ask myself whether the ki of Shamanism and other East Asian traditions, and the Holy Spirit of Christianity are the same. What is the real nature of the energy which leads people to throw their lives into such dangerous situations for justice and the common good? In the continuing minjung movements, I still wonder how one can distinguish the power of ki from that of the Holy Spirit.

How is ki different from the Holy Spirit? One could question the appropriateness of those experiences for opening an academic pneumatological discussion. However, I
believe that such experiences are the stuff of our theological reflection, and that it is precisely such religio-cultural realities that stimulate one to develop a “new paradigm” for dialogical and intercultural theology.

Paradigm shifts have occurred constantly throughout the history of Christian tradition. Already in the scriptures we see, in the Gospel of John, a cultural contextualization to the Hellenistic world, in its use of the Stoic concept of Logos. During the second century, a paradigm shift occurred when Christian apologists adopted philosophical categories from Platonic and Stoic schools in order to project a Christian faith and gospel which was culturally more relevant for that historical context. This paradigm was carried forward by Augustine in the fourth and fifth centuries and Western Christianity became and remained for many centuries under the influence of Greek philosophical categories. Thomism later introduced a new, but still Greek philosophical way of thinking based on Aristotle’s philosophy. A modern example of “paradigm shift” in theology can be found among some theologians who were influenced by European existentialism. In the contemporary period, a profound shift is taking place as Christianity encounters other religio-cultural worlds. Paradigm shifts in theology have always been related to particular historical and cultural contexts. The formulation of Christian doctrines has also been connected to the particular contexts in which the authors lived, even though theologians have not always recognized this. In fact, this insight is now more or less universally recognized, and has been articulated richly by many theologians, especially those of the “Third World.” As Robert Schreiter has said, Christian tradition [is] as a series of local theologies.2

Today, Asian Christian theologians also seek new theological paradigms, which are more appropriate for the Asian multi-religious context in which diverse religious traditions such as Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism coexisted syncretistically prior to the arrival of Christianity. My modest effort here to reconstruct a Korean pneumatology in dialogue with the concept of ki/Ultimate Ki is a step toward an Asian contextual theology. Asian theologians have begun to ask how the Holy Spirit can be expressed as ki/Ultimate Ki in an East Asian/Korean context, in a manner which is


recognizable as "Christian."

The Ultimate Ki is an East Asian/Korean term comparable to *pneuma* in Greek and *ruah* in Hebrew, both of which indicate the Spirit of God in the Christian tradition. The point of studying the Ultimate Ki is to theologize the life-centred aspect of this East Asian/Korean concept, which is perceived to be relevant for today's life-destroying context of political disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, ecological crisis, racism, sexism, and other social diseases. "Life-centred" is a particularly important notion in this thesis, since my position is that the Holy Spirit is best understood as a healing, life-giving Spirit for both humanity and the whole universe. Life-centrism, for me, is an all embracing term which includes Christ-centrism, God-centrism, and salvation-centrism. Holy Spirit is broadly understood as the ultimate source of life itself. That is, whatever generates true "life" in many other religio-cultures may be identified as the Holy Spirit.

Life-centred aspects of the Spirit are deeply embedded in Christian tradition. The Holy Spirit in the Bible can be presented not only as a transcendent metaphysical entity but also as an immanent divine energy of life and healing breath, which are relevant images and metaphors of the Spirit in our contemporary world. For example, Yahweh's *ruah* is depicted in the Old Testament as the strong wind which liberated the people of Israel from the oppression of Egypt (Ex 14:21). God's Spirit is also presented in both the Old Testament and New Testament as the breath of life (Gen 1:2 / Ps 104:29-30 / Eccles 12:7; 3:21 / Job 34:14 / Wis 1:7 / Isa 34:16 / Jn 3:3-6), life-giving mercy (Ezek 36:26) and healing power, the renewing power which restores unity for both human and other


These life-giving aspects of the Spirit in the Bible and Christian tradition are, I believe, deeply congruent with the notion of *ki*/*the Ultimate Ki* in East Asian/Korean tradition. It is important for Korean Christians to search for their own formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in dialogue with East Asian/Korean religio-cultural traditions. *Ki* philosophy, I shall argue, offers crucial theological resources for the reinterpretation of pneumatology in an East Asian/Korean way. This attempt also has important theological implications in terms of encouraging a dialogical mode of theology, since Christian theology in the East Asian/Korean context was a monologue for a long time—a monologue of the religio-cultural domination of the Western intellectual world. This monological theology is now being challenged by those involved in intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue. The larger issue is: must a Korean be a Westerner in order to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a Korean-Christian?

I shall attempt to exemplify a way of reconstructing Korean theology by focusing on *ki*/*the Ultimate Ki* panentheistic philosophy, which can be, in my view, a resource for Korean pneumatology, and for the contextual interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. The pneumatological approach is a constructive way of understanding God as the life-giving Spirit, from which significant theological implications can be drawn in relation to a holistic idea of salvation. The basic approach of this work is not to deconstruct Western pneumatology, but to introduce Korean resources for the sake of a deeper
intercultural theology.

My thesis statement may be summarized into four points. First, I shall presuppose that Christian theology for Korea must be culturally relevant to the multi-religious context of Korea, faithful to the Bible, and in continuity with Christian tradition. Secondly, I shall propose that the Holy Spirit (ruah and pneuma) as the Spirit of God and of Christ is best understood as the immanent life-giving “breath” which animates all living things, a healing “wind” which integrates broken bodies and brings a holistic salvation; that it is this aspect of the biblical pneumatological tradition, which has long been neglected, that should be emphasized for the Korean context. Thirdly, I shall show that the Ultimate Ki, as a Korean religio-cultural expression of life-giving and healing power, is a suitable concept for reconstructing pneumatology in the Korean context. Fourthly, I shall argue that the Ultimate Ki provides a useful framework for articulating a Christian panentheistic notion of God in a Korean way, and that liberation in the globalized world must be conceived in a holistic/life-giving way, including both humanity and the whole universe.

In order to achieve these theological tasks, using Suh Nam-dong’s pneumatological method of the “confluence of two stories” as a major methodological tool, I shall develop my thesis in a dialogical (or comparative) way between Western and Korean understandings of the Spirit. I shall then explore the concept of the Spirit, ruah and pneuma in the Bible and Christian tradition and the idea of the Ultimate Ki in Korean traditions as sources for Korean Christian pneumatology. The discussion of these concepts of the Spirit and the Ultimate Ki shall be presented in relation to the category of panentheism. I shall then bring together the two streams of thought, affirming the
biblical Spirit as a transcendent-immanent life-giving breath and healing wind. I shall draw out the christological, soteriological, and eschatological implications of this pneumatology for both humanity and the ecological order. Through dialogue on the theme of "Spirit," both the contribution and limitations of each tradition will be highlighted.
CHAPTER ONE
METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I shall introduce a method of doing theology cross-culturally, using especially Suh Nam-dong’s pneumatological synchronic method, namely, the “confluence of two stories.” The idea of synchronic means that the presence and the work of the Spirit is not limited to a particular time and place, but goes beyond spatio-temporal limitations and any particular cultural context. I shall also consider some of Robert J. Schreiter’s ideas about religious syncretism or synthesis. For the development of Korean contextual theology, Suh molds two currents—minjung tradition in Christianity and Korean minjung tradition—into one stream of Korean theology. Contrary to the general perception of some, who describe Suh’s methodology only in the socio-political aspect of the minjung, I shall highlight the religio-cultural context of the minjung, which is also an integral part of his methodology. For Suh, the ultimate source of holistic salvation/liberation comes from the Holy Spirit as the life-giving Spirit. Thus, discerning the Spirit at work in the concrete historical life of the minjung is an important theological task.

In relation to the idea of “confluence,” the issue of religious syncretism needs to be discussed. Suh’s idea of confluence can be further articulated by Schreiter’s understanding of religious syncretism or synthesis. I shall look at the work of Schreiter, who is aware of the fact that when one message is presented in different cultural codes,


the phenomenon of religious syncretism inevitably takes place. For him, religious syncretism or synthesis can be a useful method to construct an intercultural theology. I shall look at his work on the issue of syncretism in relation to the multi-religious Korean context in which diverse religious traditions such as Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism coexisted prior to the arrival of Christianity. Since this is a complex discussion of a vast process in which many cultures have engaged, my treatment of it here must be brief and partial.

Suh’s method is particularly useful for my thesis in three ways. First, his method, especially the notion of “confluence” between the Christian and the Korean minjung traditions, is an exemplary case of dialogical theology across cultural boundaries. As biblical reference for the Christian minjung tradition, Suh looks at the event of Exodus from the Old Testament, and at Jesus’ cross from the New Testament. As the historical reference for Korean minjung tradition, he draws from a genealogy of the minjung movement, starting from the period of the Three Kingdoms (300 CE), up to the recent human rights movement in Korea. It becomes clear here that the minjung tradition is drawn not only from a socio-political perspective, but also from a religio-cultural one. For this, Suh is conversant with Tonghak thought, in which the philosophical foundation of minjung theology is rooted. Thus, in constructing a Korean contextual pneumatology, I shall apply his method of confluence to the encounter of the Holy Spirit of Christianity with the idea of the Ultimate Ki in the Korean Tonghak tradition.


Secondly, Suh’s pneumatological approach promotes “life-centrism” in theology, since the Spirit is best understood as life. The idea of life-centrism, according to Suh, does not only indicate the life of the minjung, but also that of nature (i.e. eco-system) of the entire universe. For him, the life of the minjung, nature and the universe should not be viewed as separate entities but as an organic whole. The world as the cosmic organism shares the same life with that of the minjung in a mutual relationship. Suh says,

...those who destroy nature will lose God, and those who lose God will be alienated from nature. Since all human beings are interconnected with the world, any dehumanization is a nature-destroying process and the reverse is also the same. In this respect, God, human, and nature belong to one ecosystem which organically relates one to another...  

This worldview based on the notion of life, as Suh claims, is holistic, in that God, humanity, and the world participate in one another’s life. Suh’s understanding of life is closely related to that of Ahn Byung-mu, another exponent of minjung theology. Ahn Byung-mu explains his idea of the “theology of minjung-life” as follows:

*ki* in Korean tradition which is identical with the *ruah* and *pneuma* can be expressed as life. People in all the religious traditions in history have searched for the reality of life. For instance, the reality of life is God for Christians, *Dharma* for Buddhists, and Tao for Taoists and Confucianists. In this sense, Jesus-event is also a life-giving event in which the reality of life is fully exhibited through Jesus’ struggle and death. Life is self-sustaining through the persistent struggle against all the obstacles of death, and, therefore, life is the divine itself. This very nature of life can be found in the minjung, and the minjung can also be viewed as the source of life.  

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6 The Study Group of Korean Christian Social Problems, “*Minjung* Theology for the Life...
Thirdly, Suh’s understanding of God is a panentheistic one exhibiting both the transcendence and immanence of the Spirit. Suh supports the idea of a “becoming God” constructed by contemporary process thinkers such as Whitehead, Teilhard, and Hartshorne. Since I shall attempt to search for a mode of panentheistic pneumatology in both Western and Korean traditions, I find Suh’s panentheistic perspective quite useful. Those are the three basic reasons for my use of Suh’s pneumatological method.

Moreover, Suh Nam-dong’s idea of confluence as a theological method is an important contribution to contextualizing theology in Korea. The method of confluence challenges us to examine systematically the issues involved in Western Christian universalism, interaction of gospel and local culture, Christian identity, continuity of a living tradition of minjung, and the problem of syncretism. Suh proposes to reconsider the dominant general assumption that Christianity which came to the Western world through Jewish, Greek, and Roman culture is normative in its Western forms in every culture at any period of time. Thus, it is essential for him to reinterpret the Christian gospel, and its central theological concepts,—pneumatology, christology, soteriology, eschatology, etc.,—in order to connect it to indigenous Korean spirituality. He criticizes the view that Christian faith can be simply transplanted from the West into the soil of Korean religio-cultural traditions. The assumption of such a view is that there is a “pure gospel,” an assumption he rejects. For him, Christianity cannot simply replace the Korean traditional and indigenous religions. The spiritual heritage and truth experience of traditional and indigenous religions should be preserved, for their own sakes, but also

for the sake of a fruitful mission of Christianity in Korea. Such an understanding is based upon the premise that Christianity can maintain its own identity while “flowing together” with the Korean traditions. Suh’s idea of confluence is supported by other Asian theologians.

Anton G. Honig emphasizes the need of new theology in Asia. He says that a new theology cannot be made; it must be born. Church history shows that the interculturization of the Christian message via theological reflection coming from Jewish/Greek Christianity into the European culture took many centuries. Theology springs from an experience of faith in the midst of the surrounding world and in response to its challenges. It is the fruit of a new spirituality. Since a theology is really relevant only when it has this character, it is evident that Western theology cannot be satisfying in the Asian context. In this respect, for Asian people, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon of syncretism from a positive point of view.

Kim Kyong-Jae, a Korean theologian, understands syncretism in both negative and positive terms. From the negative standpoint, he argues that syncretism means losing religious purity, dynamism, and self-identification. Syncretism can lead to the corruption of a religion and produce idol worship. Such syncretism is doomed to fail, because it creates an artificial religion, a compound of various meanings and faiths initiated for merely socio-political motives. As the religion of Yahweh could never co-exist with the religion of Baal, so also Christianity cannot be syncretized simplistically.

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7 Che Hee-dong, Chukje, Suh Nam-dong’s Life Theology (주제 서남동의 생명신학), M.A. Thesis (1992), Yônse University, pp. 70-75.

with every other religion. On the other hand, Kim points out a positive form of syncretism in the creative “fusion of horizons.” He explains that, since the process of human life is a continual fusion of meaningful experiences, religious history itself is always and inevitably syncretic. He contends that if real life is an open system given to multiple mutual interpretations and cross-fertilization, syncretism can be a growing process in which each religion maintains its own distinct and dynamic identity. For Kim, a true syncretism is not brought about by the powerful intentions of powerful religious elites. It happens spontaneously in the unconscious minds of the people in a given culture and society. Thus, authentic syncretism is not the artificial, deliberate transformation of religions, but is a spontaneously generated process of cultural “grafting.”

According to R. S. Sugirtharajah, anti-syncretistic sentiment among Western Christian theologians is based on two premises. The first is that there is a pure, unalloyed and unvarnished gospel that can be planted in any situation. The second is that culture, especially the receiving one, is a static, finished product that is usually evil, and waiting to be purified. However, Asian theologians such as Sugirtharajah argue that both assumptions are false. On the one hand, anti-syncretism is often bound up with the construction of “authenticity,” which is closely associated with the idea of “purity.”


10 Kim, Christianity and the Encounter of Asian Religions, pp. 162-164.

However, "authenticity" or "originality" is not necessarily linked to "purity."12 The gospel narratives indicate that the gospel never existed in a pure state and that its power is evident only when it is couched in the historical and cultural experience of certain peoples. On the other hand, cultures are consistently in a process of renewal and enrichment. Both the gospel and culture are, therefore, dynamic realities. These theological points were well demonstrated during the World Council of Churches' seventh assembly at Canberra, Australia in 1991.

At Canberra, a Korean feminist theologian, Chung Hyun-kyung invoked the spirits of martyred people in history along with the spirit of "brother Jesus" to help guide contemporary interpretations of the Holy Spirit's presence. According to Chung, her own religious needs and experience go far beyond the kind of traditional Christianity practiced in most Korean churches. She says, "I discovered my bowel is a shamanist bowel, my heart is a Buddhist heart and my head is a Christian head."13 Chung celebrates the various influences contributing to her personal religious identity. She claims that God speaks through the Spirit of Buddha, through the Spirit of shamans, and through the Spirit of Jesus in Korean culture. She describes Asian people as victims of "anthropological poverty," which she defined as the condition of not trusting one's own history and traditions. Chung points out that Christianity is also a syncretic religion, which has absorbed elements of Hellenism, Judaism and many European and other cultural components.

Claiming to be a "Liberation-survival syncretist," Chung suggests that Asian


theology should move away from the preoccupation with the "doctrinal purity" of traditional Christian theology. In particular, she presents a new paradigm of Asian theology, namely, a "survival-liberation centered syncretism."  

She contends that in their struggle for liberation, 

minjung have the right to appropriate their diverse religious sources for the sustenance and empowerment of their lives. What, then, is the criterion for such appropriation? Asian people, Chung argues, have the capacity to select the life-giving elements of their cultures and religions and to weave new patterns of religious meaning. For what matters for Asian people is not the doctrinal purity of certain religions but survival and the liberation of themselves, and their communities.  

Chung’s idea of survival liberation syncretism is rooted in Suh’s notion of confluence.

However, Suh’s method of confluence as a positive interpretation of religious syncretism is also criticized by some Christian scholars who express distaste for multiple allegiances in religious matters. For example, John Berthrong observes that religious syncretic phenomena, for most Christians, are perceived as very confusing, and at worst damning. He quotes John Hick’s position: "...one can only centre one’s religious life


15 Is the question of Christian identity really irrelevant in Asia? Although I concur with Chung in the view that Asian Christianity needs different criteria for its identity, I suggest that her “survival-liberation centered syncretism” needs to be reconsidered with respect to its ecclesiological implications. She contends that what matters for Asian people is not Jesus, Buddha, Confucius, Kwan In, or Ina, but survival and the liberation of themselves and their communities. But, what is the ecclesiological implication of this? Can an organization gathered around the name and the teachings of the Buddha, for example, be called a Christian church if it seeks the liberation of women? What will be the practical result of such a theology? Can the church as such continue to exist together with such a wide open syncretism?
wholeheartedly and unambiguously upon one of them...but not more than one at once." Hick insists that a person can only maintain "one religious citizenship" rather than "dual or multiple participations." Although one's religious experiences can be deepened in the process of borrowing from neighboring religions, one still remains true to one faith, one revelation, and one manifestation of the divine reality. At this point, it is useful to look at Schreiter's examination of religious syncretism in relation to Suh Nam-dong's concept of confluence. Both Suh's and Schreiter's works provide a theological rationale for the development of local or contextual theologies.

Schreiter is also aware that syncretism has been seen as a dangerous and negative force by Christianity in general. The theological assertion of Christian uniqueness among the world religions has served to sustain a negative view of syncretism. For various reasons, many Western theologians simply eradicate the term from theological discussion. The main reason for this has to do with a concern for the integrity of "Christian identity." However, the problem of syncretism does not go away, but becomes the object of increasing lively discussion. In particular, the issue of syncretism is being


17 Ibid., pp. 182-183.

18 Starting with Adolf von Harnack and continuing on with Barth, Kraemer, and others, syncretism has been viewed as a distorted form of the Christian faith. The root of this negative attitude goes deep into Christian history and its early encounter with the diverse religiosity in the Mediterranean basin. For further discussion, see Jerald D. Gort, Hendrik M. Vroom, Rein Fernhout, and Anton Wessels, eds., Dialogue and Syncretism: An Interdisciplinary Approach (Grand Rapids, Mich: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989); W. A. Visser 't Hooft, No Other Name: Choice between Syncretism and Christian Universalism (London: SCM, 1963); Robert J. Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985).
discussed in light of its relation to the "interculturation process." Should we continue to speak of syncretism despite its negative connotation? Schreiter contends that it is important to keep the term, to come to grips with its history, and to work toward a new definition. He criticizes Peter Schineller's position that theologians should abandon the term "syncretism" mainly because the term carries so much negative weight. Schreiter argues that this is not a fruitful way to proceed, since it not only obscures the issue but also ignores an important dynamic present in the Christian church worldwide. He contends that to substitute "inculturation" or some other term for "syncretism" can evade the important point that syncretism raises, namely, the relation between theological development and cultural process.

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19 The term "interculturation" is an alternative term for "inculturation." Some theologians such as David J. Bosch realize that the term "inculturation" implies the Gospel as the subject and a culture as the object. In other words, one is always the giver and the other the receiver, as if traditional Western theologians have exclusive "ownership" of Christianity. Bosch contends that Western Christianity has often domesticated the gospel in its own culture, with the result that its gospel becomes foreign to every other culture and produces unnecessary conflict. He also points out that in the past the theology of Western missions arrogated to itself the right to be the arbitrator in relation to Third World religions and cultures, assuming, that their domesticated gospel was a fully indigenized, universalized and finished product. In such a context, "intersubjectivity" or "mutuality" becomes an impossible task, and non-Western Christians continue to be objects in their own history. In this respect, he argues that the usage of the term "inculturation" is inappropriate, because of its hidden negative connotation. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), pp. 447-455; David Chung, *Religious Syncretism in Korean Society* (Ann Arbor and London: University Microfilms International, 1959); Ahn Sang-jin, "A Study of Donghak: A Nineteenth Century Forerunner of Local Minjung Theology in Korea." Ahn says that "the right or wrong of syncretism and interreligious dialogue is to be discerned in light of what happened to the life of minjung in their concrete life place." Th. M Thesis (1994) Emmanuel College, pp. 47-53.


theology has not yet recovered from Barth's distinction between faith and religion. This distinction can make some sense only in a mono-religious situation but is less useful elsewhere. We need to come to an understanding of culture and Christian faith that is responsible to both. In this respect, Schreiter suggests a critical treatment of the naive understanding of how cultures work and cultural identities are formed, and the naive understanding of how "Christian elements" are transmitted faithfully from generation to generation and from culture to culture.

Therefore, Schreiter proposes to redefine the term "syncretism" in terms of three factors: theological, cultural, and missiological. The first, the theological, suggests that we should continue to seek to find new ways of communicating particular expressions of the Christian faith. In a world where "particularity" is often accompanied by conflict, we seek fidelity both to the gospel and to the justice of God. Schreiter argues that "particularity" should not colonize peoples, but allow their voices to join those of other Christians in the world. Thus, the syncretism of various particularities is consistent with the spirit of the gospel. The second factor, the cultural, underscores that we need to find a universal discourse which is truly dialogical and nonviolent. Again, cultural particularities which nourish and sustain people will be respected, while at the same time linking smaller communities into larger ones. The third, the missiological, draws our attention to the fact that throughout the post-colonial period, missiology has undergone a kind of identity crisis as the meaning of mission has been rethought. Schreiter suggests that today missiology needs to take the lead in the formation of new religious identities in new circumstances. For these reasons, according to Schreiter, we should continue to

22 Ibid.
speak of syncretism. He insists that we cannot simply avoid or ban its use because of its negative understanding in history; rather, we need to come to terms with the past so as to understand the present.

Given the theological legitimacy of speaking of syncretism, Schreiter extends his discussion to the interaction of gospel and culture, and develops a new understanding of Christian tradition. He asserts that Christian tradition, rooted in the New Testament itself, is also “a series of diverse local theologies.” Each of them expresses an authentic identity of Christian faith despite their radical differences. Schreiter attempts to demonstrate here how it is possible to interpret the Christian tradition as a history of local theologies. He consistently seeks for an answer to the question: How can the gospel be made relevant to a particular local situation and at the same time remain authentically Christian? Also, can one ascertain criteria for what constitutes a genuinely Christian identity? For Schreiter, there are two different approaches to the issue: The first starts from the “gospel” and the second from the “dynamics of culture.” The rationale behind these two approaches can be indicated in this way: Is theology an “invention,” or a “discovery” in different contexts?

The first approach, starting from the gospel, supports the unexamined assumption of the theology of the Western church, which has believed that the gospel utterly transcends every culture and can be accessed by people from entirely different cultural

23 Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, p. 32; The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997).

24 Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies, p. 98; The New Catholicity, pp. 68-73.
contexts. This belief presumes that when the gospel enters the culture, the gospel has a functional power or authority to examine and affirm what is good and evil in the culture, in order to purify the culture. According to this belief, the gospel, “the proclamation of Jesus Christ,” can only be communicated to a culture by moving into it, transforming it, and eventually creating a new expression of the culture. This understanding does not allow for the fact that the gospel as it developed in Western culture is also a cultural product, and therefore, also a local theology. The “Christian gospel,” as we know it in the West, was formulated in the course of syncretizing aspects of Jewish faith with Hellenistic and Roman philosophies.

The second approach, starting from culture, focuses upon the dynamics of culture. Schreiter does not reject the transcendent aspect of the gospel; he believes, for instance, that the gospel can be functional in terms of transforming evil elements of a culture. However, he stresses, at the same time, the fact that the gospel itself is a cultural product and, therefore, has never entered any culture in a pure form. Again, there is no “pure gospel” from heaven. This means, for him, that the gospel is not confined to a particular culture but goes beyond that culture in order to achieve a genuine interculturation.

As noted by Schreiter himself, difficult questions remain for each of the two approaches. If one chooses the first approach, starting from the “gospel,” how can we assure that its approach is not a form of cultural imperialism? Also, how can we explain the dynamic interrelation between Christianization and westernization? On the other hand, if one chooses the second approach, starting from culture, how can we articulate theological criteria that will assure that such close identification with culture will not end in the falsification of the gospel? Human history shows numerous examples of the
danger of human religious artifacts, e.g. the German Christians of the Nazi period, the apartheid theology of South Africa,—both of which “syncretized” and contextualized biblical faith with dominant cultural models. Therefore, for Schreiter, the two approaches need to remain in a creative tension.

Suh’s concepts resemble those of Schreiter. According to Suh’s idea of confluence, both “gospel” and “culture” are dynamic notions. Theology cannot achieve its objective of articulating the gospel in a particular context while maintaining the general assumption that a culture is merely the receiving end of the gospel. Therefore, the dubious assumptions of “pure gospel” and “static culture” are no longer tenable in the Korean context, or in any culture for that matter. For Suh, both of these notions have been distorted in the history of theology. The gospel narratives clearly show that the gospel has never existed in a pure form and that culture is constantly in a process of radical renewal and enrichment. That is why some Asian theologians, such as Aloysius Pieris, argue that theology is “discovery” in Asia. Pieris explains that the term “theology” becomes meaningful only when it bears liberation as its fruit in non-Christian cultures. Therefore, they ask the fundamental questions: What is theology? Who does it? Who has the power to interpret the meaning of the Good News? What makes the gospel Christian? These questions lead us to an awareness that Christianity triumphed in its Western context because of its ability to assimilate, reshape, and remold the surrounding cultures. The uniqueness of European Christianity was the new amalgam created out of several adjacent religions and cultures.

It is true that Korean Christian theology has generally been associated with Western colonialism in its political, socio-economic and cultural agenda. As a result,
Western missions produced many problems, especially a crisis in cultural and spiritual identity. This resulted in the near eradication of the spirituality of the indigenous cultural traditions of Korea. The outcome of such mission in Korea has been that the local peoples became the objects of Western missionaries' charity and indoctrination. However, the emerging minjung movement, and other voices in Asia burst upon their consciousness, shattering all the presuppositions of traditional missionary work. Korean people have begun to claim their own cultural and spiritual identity. In the course of finding an identity for Korean Christianity, therefore, religious syncretism has became an inevitable phenomenon. In this respect, Korean Christians have good theological reasons to continue to speak of "syncretism" despite its historic negative connotation. For them it is not only theologically justifiable but also practically necessary to speak of religious syncretism in the multi-religious situation of Korea.

In this respect, Suh's method of confluence leads us to seek an end to "monolithic theology," which has identified local culture as a "paganism." The spirit of confluence leads us to celebrate the birth of emerging diverse forms of theologies which are more inclusive and pluralistic. Both Suh's and Schreiter's treatments of local theologies help us to put Korean cultural theology and Ki-pneumatology within the context of the wider tradition of religious pluralism in the multicultural context. Perhaps Raimundo Panikkar's question is appropriate here: "Does one need to be spiritually a Semite or intellectually a Westerner in order to be a Christian?"25

Korean people's religious sensibilities and values are shaped by the cultural symbols, indigenous spiritual resources, and acts of worship around them, which do not

fit into the traditional Western theological scheme. According to both Korean and
Christian *minjung* traditions, new religious sensibilities and spiritual resources should
come from the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized, that is, the *minjung*. It is Suh’s
main thesis that where the dominant culture is oppressive and dehumanizing, we need to
take seriously the cultural sensibilities of the marginalized. It is the liberation of the
oppressed, not any religious doctrine, that is important and urgent in Korea. The
dynamics of gospel and culture, then, can lead to radical change in various aspects and
dimensions of Korean theology. Accordingly, a future theology of the Spirit for Korean
Christians will have to be radical enough to incorporate elements of various traditions, in
order that Korean people may know and feel liberative power.

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CHAPTER TWO
PANENTHEISTIC PNEUMATOLOGY AND THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN TRADITION

The word “panentheism” was coined by K. F. C. Krause (1781-1832 CE), a German philosopher of the early nineteenth century who was known as a student of Hegel and Fichte. The prefix “pan” means “all,” “theos” is “god,” and “en” means “in” in Greek. Hence, the literal meaning of panentheism is “all in God,” which emphasizes the all-embracing inclusiveness of God as compared to God’s separateness from creation which predominantly appeared in traditional classical theism. Krause perceives the deity as a “divine organism inclusive of all lesser organisms.”¹ He maintains that God as the primordial being embraces and unifies the world while transcending it. For him, God is identified with the world, but God is more than the world. Krause worked in a philosophical atmosphere under the influence of G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831 CE) in which traditional theism was felt to be inadequate, following the critique of Immanuel Kant.² Panentheism is also distinct from “pantheism,” i.e. “all is God” or “all is divine.” Krause’s understanding of panentheism has been taken up and modified in various ways by contemporary process thinkers, such as Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb, and Norman Pittenger, as well as by such diverse theologians as Jürgen Moltmann, Sallie


McFague, and Elizabeth Johnson.

The core idea of panentheism as depicted by the authors mentioned above is that God is in all things and all things are in God.\(^3\) For this panentheism, God has her/his own identity apart from the universe, while God is in the universe, and the universe is within the reality of God. In other words, God is not reducible to creation or creatures, but rather transcends them; thus God's primordial nature is affirmed.

For our purpose here, it is useful to consider panentheism specifically from the point of view of the founding thinker of process philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947 CE). Whitehead's perception of the relation between God and the world helps us to identify and clarify a Korean concept of panentheism, which needs to be distinguished from the Western definition of panentheism. Korean panentheism is difficult to classify in Western terms, but Whitehead seems the closest among Western thinkers to the Korean way of thinking the Ultimate. Whitehead's panentheism needs to be understood in light of this remarkable statement:

It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent, as that the World is permanent and God is fluent. It is as true to say that God is one and the World many, as that the World is one and God many. It is as true to say that in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently, as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently. It is as true to say that the world is immanent in God, as that God is immanent in the world. It is as true to say that God transcends the world, as that the world transcends God. It is as true to say that God creates the world, as that the world creates God.\(^4\)

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The distinctive aspect of Whitehead’s panentheism is that he opened the possibility of the transcendence of the world, while affirming a dipolar theism in which both the primordial and consequent nature of God are observed. This dipolar principle of the perception of God can be called “dual transcendence” which implies that there is that in the creaturely realm which God is not able to influence, due to the genuine indeterminacy and universal freedom of the world and its inhabitants. In Whitehead’s panentheism, God, who can be seen as both the cause and effect of the world, is involved in time, and thus knows the future only as a set of possibilities or probabilities. Accordingly, human beings and other beings can exercise a significant degree of free will and, as “co-creators” with God, become participants in the continuing creation or evolution of the world. This idea will be further explored in relation to the understanding of Korean panentheism characterized by the concept of the Ultimate Ki.

Keeping in mind the fact that different types of panentheism have been developed in the Western tradition, we turn to the discussion of Western pneumatology which shall be presented in the framework of the Western definition of panentheism. To consider the foundation of Western Christian pneumatology, it is important to open with the examination of two key biblical words, *ruah* and *pneuma*, translated as Spirit, denoting the divine presence in the biblical tradition. I intend here to deal only with particular aspects of these terms, which relate to the topic of the thesis, without attempting to expound these concepts fully.
1. **What is the Holy Spirit?**

1-1. **Ruah**

The Hebrew word *ruah*, meaning "moving air," probably arose from the particular experience of the Hebrew people living in or near the desert. Such a natural desert phenomenon as wind blown sand was for them a fascinating and simultaneously terrifying reality that immediately affected their lives. The Hebrew people lived in fear of and, at times, in awe of the mighty blast of the *ruah*. They believed that the desert wind has a divine and supernatural power; it became a metaphor for God. The anthropomorphic interpretation of *ruah* as the personal Spirit of God is added in the Old Testament, a relatively new idea in ancient Near Eastern literature. Israel gradually developed her own peculiar theism based on the pre-Israelite concept of the divine wind under the influence of the monotheism of the covenant faith. In other words, Israel's description of Yahweh's unique power and Spirit, demonstrated above all at the Red Sea, was formulated in tandem with broader ancient Near Eastern concepts.\(^5\)

In the Old Testament the word *ruah* appears 380 times.\(^6\) Since the word *ruah* carries diverse connotations,\(^7\) according to its particular historical contexts, it is not a

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simple matter to assign a single meaning. It exceeds the scope of this thesis to attempt to look at all the meanings that occur in the Bible. Thus, I shall limit the consideration of the term *ruah* to its etymological origin, "air," from which two distinctive implications can be drawn: one indicates the "breath" or "life-energy" that permeates all things, and the other is "wind" in nature. Drawing upon the idea of the life-giving breath of the Spirit, we should also note the association of *ruah* with other Hebraic words, such as *neshama*, and consider the role or function of *ruah*, and how it is at work in relation to creation and salvation in the Bible. The meaning of *ruah* as "moving air" suggests the life-giving Spirit, often conceived as the creative and life-sustaining power existing in each creature as the breath of life. The second is the wind which is intimately related to the world of gods and which sometimes works as a messenger of the divine. We shall begin with the concept of life-giving Spirit.

*Ruah* as life-giving Spirit is often interpreted in relation to God's act of creation. One can observe examples in various places in the Old Testament as follows.

For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life (*ruah*); everything that is on the earth shall die (Gen 6:17)

Everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life (*ruah*) died (Gen 7:22).

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the


breath (ruah) of his mouth (Ps 33:6).

When you hide your face they are dismayed; when you take away their breath (ruah), they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit (ruah) they are created; and you renew the face of the ground (Ps 104: 29-30).

I will cause breath (ruah) to enter you, and you shall live (Ezek 37:5).

As these biblical references suggest, the Hebrew people in ancient times believed that the inhalation and exhalation of air was the norm of livingness in all beings. Here, the special significance of ruah can be drawn from the passages as an affirmation of the connection between breath and life. In this sense, ruah is analogous with the presence of life, which is inseparable from the notion of breath. To have breath or spirit (ruah), therefore, means to be alive and to be alive is to share the life which comes from God.

As the passages confirm, the source of all life is God, who has her/his own creative breath, which gives life to human beings and animals. Ruah as the breath of God is closely related to the biblical understanding of the animate creation in God’s work of creating, sustaining (Ps 104: 29-30 / Ezek 3:5), and taking away life (Job 34:14). According to the Psalms, ruah as the breath of God is the agent of God’s creation: “by the word of God the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth (Ps 33:6).” That is, ruah, along with the word of God is the energy of creation. Here, one can glance at the ontological distinction of God and the world. Although God shares


his/her life with creaturely life, a profound awareness of the distinction between God as the source of life and human beings as the recipients of life is also observed. This means that whereas God’s *ruah* as the source of life is limitless, the life of human and other living creatures, though once given by God, cannot be permanently preserved. *Ruah* in these passages is used to explain the relation of God to those whose life completely depends upon God. Moreover, God’s *ruah* functions not only to give physical life but is also related to its emotional and intellectual aspects. According to Exodus, God fills Bezalel with divine spirit (*ruah*)—that is, with ability, intelligence and knowledge in every kind of craft (Ex 31:3).

The idea of the breath of God also needs to be discussed in connection with the term *neshama*, which often appears with *ruah*, and also means the life-giving Spirit. Is *neshama* then identical with *ruah* as the breath of life that comes from God? Is there any difference between the two? Here, it is necessary to look at some biblical passages relevant to *neshama*:

...Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (*neshe'ma*) of life; the man became a living being (Gen 2:7).

As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same. By the breath (*neshe'ma*) of God they perish, and by the blast of his anger they are consumed (Job 4:8-9).

For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies so dies the other. They all have the same breath (*neshe'ma*), and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity (Eccl 3:19).

According to these passages, God created a human being with *neshama* which is described as the substance of life. *Neshama* is not only used with respect to human life but is also applied to other living creatures, such as the animals of the field (Gen 2:19),
the birds (Gen 9:9), and the animals of the sea (Gen 1:21). Here, *neshama* is perceived as the life-giving breath which comes from God. According to Gerard von Rad, *neshama* carries the more direct implication of life itself.\(^\text{12}\) For instance, in Job, "... as long as my breath (*neshama*) is in me and the spirit of God (*ruah*) is in my nostrils (Job 27:3)."

Although this passage employs *neshama* and *ruah* distinctively, their meanings are identical. Von Rad pays particular attention to the expression "breathed into" (Gen 2:7) as this describes how God created a human being, a link which implies *neshama* as the life giving-Spirit that comes from God's mouth. W. Eichrodt also understands the clear link between *neshama* and *ruah*, categorizing both as the divine life-giving Spirit or power, the breath of life or life itself.\(^\text{13}\) He further explains the homogeneity of *neshama* and *ruah* by pointing out that God's Spirit (*ruah*) is identical with the power or life (*neshama*) of God given to living creatures.

As the biblical passages cited above indicate, a human being becomes a living being as soon as God breathes the same *neshama* into his/her nostrils that is given also to animals (Gen 2:7; 6:17 / Job 33:4 / Eccl 3: 19, 21). All the myriad things in the world derive life from the breath of God and then return to nature as God takes away their lives (Gen 6:3 / Ps 104: 29 / Job 34:14). Thus, God's Spirit is the creative power of all creatures that renews their lives. God speaks the word of creation and is the source of power that governs all life. Here, Eichrodt does not differentiate *neshama* from *ruah*. The only significant difference is that *neshama* indicates only the "breath of God,"


whereas *ruah* is used to speak of both the breath of God and other related forces, such as wind in nature.

If the other meaning of *ruah* is the wind, this meaning is extended to include not only the life of human beings but also the life of nature as a whole. Some biblical passages related to *ruah* as wind are as follows:

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath [wind] of the Lord (*ruah yhwh*) blows upon it; surely the people are grass (Isa 40:7).

By the breath [wind] of God (*ruah elohim*) ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen fast (Job 37:10).

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind (*ruah*) blow over the earth, and the waters subsided (Gen 8:1).

You blew with your wind (*ruah*), the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters (Ex 15:10).

Here, *ruah* as wind is a divine tool to govern the world and all the natural phenomena. The breath of the Lord blowing from God (*ruah yhwh*) symbolizes the divine wind, which associates with various natural phenomena. God is immanent in the world and nature with her/his breath and wind of life.15 How then does God’s *ruah*, which pervades the universe as natural wind, carry any personal characteristics of God? Or can *ruah* be

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14 The various examples of *ruah* and *neshama* as wind can be explained into two fragments; first, *ruah* and *neshama* are associated with natural wind (Lev 26:36 / 1 Kings 18:15 / 2 Kings 3:17 / Job 21:18; 28:25; 30:22 / Ps 83:13, etc.); second, *ruah* and *neshama* is depicted as the divine wind which is also related to human affairs (Gen 8:1 / Ex 15:10 / Num 11:31 / 1 Sam 22:11 / 1 Kings 18:45 / 2 Kings 2:1, 11 / Job 37:9-13 / Ps 104:3 / Isa 11:15; 29:6 / Hos 13:15, etc.). Hong Kang-il, Ibid, p. 95.

simply defined in impersonal terms as breath or wind, comparable to the Chinese notion of spirit-matter called *ki*. Keeping this in mind, our discussion needs to move on to the concept of *pneuma* in the New Testament in which a strong anthropomorphic image of the Spirit is preeminent.

1-2. *Pneuma*

In the New Testament, the term *pneuma* is mainly used to indicate the Spirit of God congruent in meaning with the term *ruah*. The Septuagint usually translates *ruah* as *pneuma* (some 264 times). In the New Testament, *pneuma* is found 375 times with a similar wealth of meaning as in the Old Testament, but with much emphasis on the Spirit of Jesus, or Spirit of Christ. Since the full examination of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is a very large task, here the writer shall choose some sample texts where we see the Spirit as the Spirit of God in line with the idea of creative wind and giver of life.

In Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, *pneuma* is used to indicate the elemental and natural vital force, understood as the blowing wind and breath of life. *Pneuma* as wind may also mean “storm” which blows powerfully, or various types of wind such as “fair wind,” “breeze,” “light breath of wind,” or “vapor.” In some cases, *pneuma* as the agent of natural meteorological processes affects the climate, eco-system, and even human character. Here, *pneuma* as wind is both material and spiritual force. This philosophical and metaphorical usage of *pneuma* appears in the New Testament. For

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example, John and Paul speak of the Holy Spirit as wind as follows:

The wind blows (*pneuma pnei*) where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (*pneuma*). (In 3:8)

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind (*pneuma*), and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (Acts 2:2)

The other predominant image of *pneuma* as the breath of life is related to the microcosm of organic life including humans, animals, and other life-forms that constantly repeat the process of inhaling and exhaling. *Pneuma* as breath is a sign or condition of life. The idea of the generative and life-giving or creating cosmogonic Spirit of life is widespread in primitive mythology and religion. In the New Testament, *pneuma* as life-giving Spirit is expressed in the story of Jesus’ birth and the meaning of new creation. Here, the Holy Spirit means that God is a vital force that grants vitality to the whole creation. It is God’s inspiring wind and breath by which God gives life in creation and re-creation.

The angel said to her, “the Holy Spirit (*pneuma*) will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.” (Lk 1:35)

Thus, it is written, “the first man, Adam, became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit (*pneuma*). (1 Cor 15:45)

In addition to these, *pneuma* also means “spirit” in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy. The basic etymological idea of a powerful, material, moving breath, with its

17 Ibid., pp. 335-336.

diverse function in humans and the cosmos, is closely associated with the employment of pneuma for mental and spiritual realities in Greek and Hellenistic philosophy.\textsuperscript{19} The unique development of pneuma in the New Testament, and through the patristic tradition, lays its stress on the anthropomorphic idea of pneuma (h)agios as the Holy Spirit, clearly distinguished from other spirits, which are profane. In particular, this aspect of pneuma in the New Testament is attributed to a distinctive divine person, the Holy Spirit\textsuperscript{20}, who is sharply differentiated from human soul, mind, and flesh. The universality of pneuma is gradually de-emphasized in favor of the exclusivity of the Holy Spirit dwelling among Christians and in the Christian. The particular aspect of pneuma as life-giving Spirit is identified with the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is often seen as the Healer, Comforter, Counselor, Life-Giver and so on (Jn 14:17, 26 / 15:26 / 16:13). The linkage between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ is an essential relationship, due to the fact that all pneumatological statements of the New Testament are deeply connected to a christological reference, which becomes the basis for the Christian trinitarian theology of the Holy Spirit.

New Testament pneumatology is intimately connected, then, to christology. It is by the power of God’s Spirit that Jesus was conceived (Mt 1:20), baptized (Mt 3:11 / Lk 3:16), cast out demons (Mt 12:28 / Lk 11:20), and promises great events of healing and

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 336-337.

\textsuperscript{20} Needless to say, the word “Holy” of the “Holy Spirit” is used to distinguish this Spirit from other spirits. “Holy” means “the attributes of a being which entirely fulfils the purpose of its existence and is thus at one with itself.” In this respect, only God as the Holy Spirit is holy, “the awesome and fascinating mystery” and “utterly other,” which are sharply separated from other spirits. Gerald O’Collins, ed., \textit{A Concise Dictionary of Theology} (New York / Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991), p. 94.
liberation (Lk 4:18f). In particular, the Spirit-anointed mission of Jesus, the proclamation of the reign of God, and his death on the cross and resurrection, demonstrate a profound interconnection between Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit.

The relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus can be indicated in two ways: Jesus as “Spirit-bearer,” and Jesus as “sender of the Spirit.” The former implies that the Holy Spirit has a divine priority over against Jesus. Examples of this are found especially in the synoptic gospels which describe Jesus as the messianic bearer of the Spirit (Mt 1:12 / Lk 4:1, 4 / Acts 10:38). Jesus is empowered by the Spirit, yet he is interpreted as the “Lord of the pneuma,” rather than simply as “pneumatic.” Also, according to the Synoptics, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Mk 1:8 / Mt 3:11 / Lk 3:16). Jesus becomes the actualization of the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit.

Examples of the latter, Jesus as “sender of the Spirit,” are found especially in Paul and John. Jesus is depicted not as the Spirit-bearer but as the sender of the Spirit in their writing. According to Paul, the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of the Son who becomes life-giving Spirit (Rom 8:9 / 2 Cor 3:17 / Gal 4:6 / Phil 1:19). Also in John Jesus speaks of the Spirit as “the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name…” (Jn 14:26). Jesus is the first receiver of the Spirit and becomes also the sender of the Spirit to a multitude of different people (Jn 20:22 / Acts 2:1-13). This is an important aspect of New Testament pneumatology, which depicts the person and work of Jesus Christ as the result, as well as the beginning of God’s saving presence in the world.

as life-giving Spirit (Jn 20:22 / Acts 2:1-13).22

Quite clearly, the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ is also the “Spirit of God” (Rom 8:9-11). That is, the Holy Spirit (pneuma) of the New Testament is the same Spirit of God (ruah) that we met in the Old Testament, the universal Spirit of the Creator. We now turn to look at the ontological presence of God’s life-giving Spirit in the Christian tradition. Since this is potentially a vast discussion, the writer shall focus on ontology of the Spirit in connection with the concept of panentheism.

2. Historical Anticipations of Christian Panentheistic Pneumatology

It is important to recognize that the universality and omnipresence of the divine Spirit is not a new idea in Western theology. I shall therefore provide a brief overview of the historical development of Christian pneumatology, particularly in respect to the idea of the universal divine immanence, as exemplified in the work of the early church fathers, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin. Although the dominant feature of these theologians’ theism follows the line of classical theism in which God is presented as the perfect and immutable Being, completely apart from the world, I shall attempt to retrieve some other aspects of their thought, as these are related to the idea of the divine immanence in the world. I shall not attempt to present fully the pneumatologies of these great theologians.

22 Two versions of the giving of the Spirit to the church need to be noted here. First, John 20:22, “When he [Jesus] had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit…”; Second, Acts 2:1-13, “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven here came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability...” This is an account of the empowerment of the church for its mission.
but only indicate the ways in which they may anticipate an appropriate Christian panentheism.

2-1 The Church Fathers to Augustine

A brief introduction to early Christian pneumatology is essential if we are to understand the classical theistic position represented here by Aquinas, Calvin, and the world of contemporary Christian theology. Interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit emerged relatively late in the thought of the Christian church, compared to the articulation of christology. Since Christians in the period of the early church were deeply preoccupied with christological concerns, the early fathers made few references to the Holy Spirit, and held a very attenuated pneumatology. Henry B. Swete observes that in the Christian life of the early post-apostolic church, the Holy Spirit was not praised as God's Spirit in hymns nor did Christian theologians before the third century attempt to examine the relationship between the Spirit and the Father and the Son.23

For example, Ignatius of Antioch (?-117 CE) mentions the Holy Spirit only once, in the context of preaching. Although he occasionally uses trinitarian formulae, he makes little of them theologically. Ignatius tends to deal with the Holy Spirit simply as a divine force or power associated with God and Christ. Yet, he does not suggest any identification between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is difficult to find any idea of "Spirit-Christology" in Ignatius's theology.24


24 William R. Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of
Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202 CE) disputes the notion of the Holy Spirit as the giver of life and never explicitly calls the Spirit God. He says, "the breath of life which renders man alive is one thing, the quickening spirit that renders him spiritual is another." However, certain aspects of the thought of Irenaeus affirm the idea of divine immanence through the Spirit. He employs the metaphor of the "two hands" of God by which he created all things. God has his Word which is the Son and his wisdom which is the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit and Son are two modes of activity of God the Father. Here, the Spirit has a double role, participating both in the work of creation and of salvation. Irenaeus interprets the function of the Spirit in creation in connection with God's creation of human beings in his image and likeness (Gen 1:26). For him, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to lead human beings to attain the likeness of God, and by the Spirit alone they become truly human and are genuinely able to understand the innate goodness of the Creator. However, with the Fall, human beings lost in Adam the privilege of being in the image and likeness of God. The aim of God's Incarnation, according to Irenaeus, was to restore the lost divine image in human beings and to achieve a union with God. In interpreting the Incarnation, Irenaeus seemed to attempt to transcend spirit-matter dualism and to strive to reunite nature-spirit, body-soul, and creation-redemption. This involves the dynamic activity of the Spirit, which "descended from God on the Son of God, made Son of man, and with him became accustomed to dwell among the human race, and to dwell in God's creatures, working the Father's will


26 Heron, _The Holy Spirit_, p. 65.
in them, and renewing them from their old state into newness of Christ" (*Adversus Haereses* III. xvii.1). This intrinsic relation between creation and redemption, the creative and salvific breath of the Spirit, and the restoration of human nature in God's image through the Incarnation, signify the idea of the divine immanence in which the entire creation is restored by being absorbed into the cosmic Christ. In this respect, Irenaeus's pneumatology includes some tenets denoting an intimate relationship or an emphatic bond between God and the creation, by the creative transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Origen of Alexandria (185-254 CE) though innovative on the doctrine of the Trinity, apparently remained a subordinationist in pneumatology. One of the important passages concerning the Holy Spirit is to be found in Origen's work *The Commentary on John*. Origen interprets the passage of John 1:3—"All things were made by him (the Word)—"to mean that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to, or owes his existence to the Word, being included in these "all things." Origen speaks of the trinitarian appropriations, attributing to the Father "the source of deity," to the Son "God's Word or Reason," to the Spirit "the Breath." Although the term "Trinity" was rare in the Greek writings of Origen, it was nevertheless there. For him, there are three subsistent realities or *hypostases*, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the Father alone is without

27 Quoted by Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 66.


30 Ibid.
origin. Origen describes the Holy Spirit as needing the intermediary function of the Son to subsist and to work individually. The Spirit plays a role in the incarnation of the Son and follows up that incarnation in the Christian church, sanctifying life and conferring the spiritual gifts. However, this does not mean that Origen proposes that the Spirit is not deity but something “made” or “created” by the Father through the Son. Reynolds tells us that the deity of the Spirit is highly problematic in Origen’s theology. For Origen, he argues, the Father alone is God and the Spirit is not deity but something “made” by the Father through the Son. Nevertheless, Origen points out that the Holy Spirit possesses the same “substantiality” as the other two, associating with the Father and the Son in honour and dignity. Subordinationism of the Spirit seems to dominate in Origen’s pneumatology, yet he does not say that the Spirit is a creature. The question of the origin of the Holy Spirit does not seem to have been clear to Origen.

The Arian heresy (318-325 CE) denied the divinity of both Son and Spirit. In fact, the focus of the debate was primarily on christological questions. The Arian controversy shows that the early church struggled with the problems of reconciling transcendence and immanence. Owing to the monopolar tenets of classical metaphysics, the conceptual categories of transcendence and immanence became mutually exclusive. Arius advocated the Son’s moral changeability or improvability, rejecting the deity of

31 Reynolds, Towards a Process Pneumatology, pp. 111-112.

32 Origen states, “It is not clear whether He [the Holy Spirit] is born or not born, whether He [the Holy Spirit] is to be considered as Son of God or not. But all that is to be inquired into, using the best of our power from the Holy Scripture, inquiring with wisdom and diligence. It is, however, certainly taught with the utmost clearness in the Church, that the Spirit inspired each one of the saints, both the prophets and the apostles, and that there was not one spirit in the men of old and another in those who were inspired at the coming of Christ.” Crouzel, Origen, p. 199.
Jesus Christ. Moreover, Arius’s concept of the Trinity is meant to promote the absolute attributes of God’s oneness. The primary purpose of Arius’s Trinity is to dismiss any kind of plurality in God and to disconnect any substantialist relationship with the other two Persons.33 Arius states, “the essence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are separate in nature, and are estranged, unconnected, alien and without participation in each other.... They are utterly dissimilar from each other with respect to both essence and glories to infinity.”34 Here we can observe that the compelling motive of Arianism was the desire to preserve a strict monotheism maintaining God’s radical aloofness from the world.

Although Athanasius also emphasizes the divine oneness, his concept of the oneness of God is the divine unity in which three Persons are not divided but distinguished. For him, the Holy Spirit has the same oneness with the Son, as the Son has with the Father. The Holy Spirit originates in the Father, who is the sole self-transcendent Cause.35 He uses an analogy of “light” and “radiance” in order to explain the relationship of the Son and the Spirit with the Father: the Father is “light,” the Son “radiance,” and the Spirit “activity and lambent grace.”36 Athanasius goes on to say that “there is then a Triad, holy and complete, confessed to be God in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, having nothing foreign or external mixed with it... in nature indivisible and its


36 Ibid.
activity is one. The Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit."

For Athanasius, the Spirit has the same "co-essential relationship" with the Father as the Son has, emphasizing the oneness of the Spirit and the Son: the Spirit is given from the Father through the Son. He believes that the Christian Church is founded on the faith in one God, God in three distinctive persons. The Spirit, even as the Father and Son, is not just a divine attribute or external to God in an essential sense, but one person of the Triune God.

The Arian controversy evoked in the church an affirmation of the status of Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of the Father. The Nicene creed formulated at the Council of Nicea (325 CE) emphasized the second article, which speaks of Jesus Christ as homousios with the Father. The christological conflict led on to the question of the Holy Spirit, but Nicea minimized the Spirit. The original version of the Nicene Creed said little about the Holy Spirit, only declaring at the end that "we believe in the Holy Spirit." However, the Council of Constantinople (381 CE) added a substantial article on the Holy Spirit.

And in the Holy Spirit
the Lord, the Life-Giver,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father is worshipped and glorified,
who spoke through the prophets.39

The three Cappadocian fathers, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory

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37 Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 79.


of Nyssa, had helped to move the ancient church to the Constantinopolitan addition. Gregory of Nazinanzus (330-390 CE) referred to the Holy Spirit rhetorically as the *theos agraptos*, which means "the God about whom nobody writes." He further describes the confusion and ambiguity about the concept of the Holy Spirit during that particular period as follows: "some consider it [the Holy Spirit] energy, others a creature, others God; still others are uncertain what to think of it, out of reverence to Scripture, which makes no clear statement." Reynolds interprets this confusion as a consequence of a vacillation between a Stoic or materialistic understanding of Spirit and a Platonic or nonmaterial view of Spirit. In the thought of Gregory the Platonic idea of Spirit seems to be dominant, emphasizing transcendence at the expense of immanence.

Basil of Caesarea (330-379 CE) mainly deals with the central Anomoian objections to the equality of the Spirit with the Father and Son. The argument of Anomoians was that since the Spirit was mentioned third after the other two, the nature of the Spirit was inferior to theirs. Thus, the Spirit cannot be conceived as a member of a divine triad and, therefore, there is no place for the Spirit in the Godhead. They particularly emphasized the passage of Amos 4:13—God creates the wind—and of John 1:3—All things were made by him—indicating the creaturely character of the Holy Spirit. Responding to the argument of Anomoians, Basil describes the association of

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the Holy Spirit with the God's work of life-giving activity and creation. He refers to the passage of Psalm 33:6—"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all the power thereof"—in order to demonstrate the creative work of the Holy Spirit which brings them to perfection. Basil does not believe that the Holy Spirit is essentially inferior to other members of the Trinity. Rather he asserts the inseparability of the three Persons, in favor of the deity of the Holy Spirit. For him, all the three Persons deserve the same honor and are worthy of the same dignity. He emphasizes the interrelations of the Trinity; "If a man calls on God but rejects the Son, his faith is empty. If someone rejects the Spirit, his faith in the Father and the Son is made useless... it is impossible to worship the Son except in the Holy Spirit; it is impossible to call upon the Father except in the Spirit of adoption." The major point of Basil is that the Father is God and the Son is God in which Christians experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in their prayer, hymns, and all doxologies. Since the Three Persons share a common nature, and equal honour, the deity of the Holy Spirit cannot be denied. To deny the Holy Spirit is to doubt the presence of Father and Son. This inseparability of the Spirit from the Father and the Son leads to the conclusion that the persons of the divine Trinity deserve to be worshipped and glorified together: "Equality of honour means the equality of nature."

44 Meredith, *The Cappadocians*, p. 31.


46 Meredith, Ibid.
Gregory of Nyssa (335-380 CE), younger brother of Basil of Caesarea, believes that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not created. The Three-in-One exists within divine being. Gregory makes the distinction between “Being-in-itself” and “Being-by-participation.” For him, Being-in-itself is divine being, which is the ousia of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whereas all creatures belong to the status of the Being-by-participation. The divine Trinity, Being-in-itself, is perfect, changeless, and infinite. The Trinitarian Being is not dependent on anything outside of itself, and therefore cannot be reduced by diminution.

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) made important contributions to Western pneumatology. In many aspects of Augustine’s theology, a spirit-matter dualism is evidenced, since he is under the influence of Plato and Neo-Platonism. For Augustine, God as Spirit has no physical dimension or corporeal aspects, but is congruent with an impassible and incorruptible nature. For Augustine, any physical or consequent attributes of the Spirit cannot be part of the essence of the divine reality. God’s Spirit remains as a pure inner procession or interaction within the intra-personal relations of the Trinity. He affirms the full equality of the three divine Persons, who differ only in their mutual relations. He employs the term “essence” rather than “substance” when referring to God, in order to avoid certain implications derived from Aristotelian philosophies. For him,


48 Augustine, *De Trinitate* VI. 7, see Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 87-88; Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The All-Present God* (London: B. Herder Book Co, 1953), pp. 221-222.
“gift” and “love” are major images of the Spirit, that is, the bond of communication between Father and Son. Augustine says,

... God the Father alone is he from whom the Word is born, and from whom the Spirit principally proceeds. And therefore I have added the word ‘principally’ because we find that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also. But the Father gave this too to the Son, not as to one already existing and not yet processing it; but whatever he gave to the only-begotten Word, he gave by begetting him. Therefore he so begot him that the common Gift should proceed from him also, and the Holy Spirit should be the Spirit of both.

The Spirit is their mutual love as well as the gift that unites the Church as God’s people. The Holy Spirit is, therefore, the Spirit of both Father and Son. Thus Augustine lays the framework for the filioque.

Augustine’s pneumatological formulations draw a sharp distinction between God and the world, the human and the divine, which are mutually exclusive categories. In this respect, he eliminates any possibility of God’s ontological unity with the world and rejects the idea of an immanence of the Spirit implanted within human nature. Nevertheless, since he is not only Platonic but also biblical in his inspiration, Augustine’s theology is not completely structured by a static view of reality but rather carries some aspects of the dynamic character of the biblical Holy Spirit. The immanent pneumatology of Augustine is displayed in connection with the loving and preserving feminine image of the Holy Spirit. He uses the analogy of a mother hen in order to explore the idea that creation is an ongoing and dynamic process by which the immanence of the Spirit holds humanity together. The creation, in Augustine’s thought,

49 Augustine, De Trinitate V. 12, in Ibid, pp. 89.

50 Augustine, De Trinitate XV. 29, quoted by Heron, The Holy Spirit, pp. 89-90.

can also be interpreted as “the realm of opened and unmeasured possibilities that wait realization” by the “benevolent and creative will” of the Spirit. Here, the metaphor of the mother hen implies a recognition of the Spirit as a loving, vital will, and creative life-giving energy, whose activities are not once-and-for-all, but continuous. Although God’s providential action and immutable will are basic to his theology, there is yet another dimension which implies the concept of the all-inclusiveness of God’s being, in which the world is the sphere of God’s immanent presence, in the form of the life-giving Spirit.

2-2 Thomas Aquinas

It is hard to deny that the predominant feature of Aquinas’ theism characterizes God as wholly separate and independent of the world. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) evidences a strong sense of God as the divine absoluteness, perfection, immutability, which truncates God’s mutual relationship with the world. In his giant work *Summa Theologiae*, the tenets of classical theism are clearly demonstrated, highlighting God’s traditional attributes such as aseity, impassibility, monopolarity, and so forth. Aquinas understands God within the framework of Aristotelian philosophy, in which God is described as the “unmoved Mover.” This God is completely free from the presence of the world and unaffected by the motion of the universe. Since God is the supreme cause


53 In general, the range of classical theism is the theology of Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, and Calvin, and other theism under their influence.
of all things, not the effect, God as the self-sufficient and immutable necessary Being can neither be increased nor diminished by any other factors outside of himself. For example, Aquinas states:

> Since God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that creatures are really related to God Himself; whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, Aquinas's perception of God does not totally exclude the notion of the divine immanence in the world. God's relation to the world, for Aquinas, is closely associated with the divine activity of self-giving love. God extends himself toward the creature, relating himself to the world. Since the idea of creation is nothing but self-giving action, however, God's dynamic relation to the world does not involve in any sense a passive dependence on the world.

Norris Clarke, a neo-Thomist commentator on Aquinas, takes up the notion of God as the first efficient cause, in which he finds a very rich sense of divine immanence. He speaks of a "bond of community" between the effects and the cause, touching upon the idea that all effects stem from the cause and that the cause imparts its reality into the effects as a gift of self-giving activity. As Aquinas says, "the world takes its origin from God as His self-expression," and here, the ontological relation between God as the cause and the world as the effect is established without reducing God's attribute of perfection.⁵⁵

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David Burrell maintains a similar perspective to that of Clarke, dealing with the issue of God's relation with contingent things. However, Burrell points out that Aquinas does not affirm a process or property inherent in God which results in creatures. Although God freely relates to the world with his unceasing love, the way of God's coming to the world is "unidimensional and asymmetrical." Burrell cites Aquinas' saying, "[God's] relation (habitus) to creatures does not flow from his nature. He does not produce creatures out of the necessity of his nature, but rather by intellect and will." For this reason, it is difficult to claim a "real relation" to creatures in God.

William J. Hill also contends that creation for Aquinas is totally God's self-giving activity for the world and eliminates the possible interpretation of mutual interaction between God and the world. If God, he argues, is subordinate to the ongoing process, God becomes vulnerable in being affected by the world, and then loses the true essence of transcendence. In his view, this God is no longer the God of Christian experience.

As we have seen, these theological interpretations of Aquinas's perception of God's relation to the world do not compromise God's perfection as the first cause of all things or approve the notion of rendering God contingent in any sense. Nevertheless, the aspect of divine immanence in Aquinas's thought is not totally dissolved by the dominant idea of the transcendence of God.

Something approaching a panentheistic tenet in Aquinas's theology can be observed in some passages of Summa Theologiae in which God exists everywhere. God


57 Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1. 14. 8, 1.19.4.

58 William Hill, The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation
is "omnipresent," not as part of creaturely substance but as a cause of all existences. He says: "existence is that factor in us [intimum], and in every other object as well, that is deeper than anything else...it is fitting, and even necessary, that God be in all things." The Latin term intimum here indicates innermost, interior, and deepest, which explains how God reaches to the very core of all other existences in the world. God is thus intimately related to every single thing that constitutes the world. This seems, at first sight, to be analogous to the idea of pantheism, in which God and the world are identical. However, a clear difference from pantheism is presented in Aquinas' understanding that God's relation to the world is self-relational and self-communicating. In other words, God is in all things not as the essential existence of creatures but as the cause of their existence. Aquinas declares in the Commentary on the Sentences that God's existence is in all things not essentially but causally. The divine immanence in Aquinas' perception of God is affirmed without renouncing in the least the basic tenet of God's transcendence.

2-3 John Calvin

The theology of John Calvin (1509-1564 CE) is of particular interest for Korean theology, because of his formative influence on Korean Presbyterianism, a major


59 Stefan Swiezawski, St. Thomas Revisited (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), translated by Theresa Sandok, p. 66.


61 Aquinas, Commentary on the Sentences I. 8. 1, 2. Quoted by Swiezawski, St. Thomas Revisited, p. 66.
religious force in Korean Christianity. Although the principal characteristics of Calvin’s pneumatology are closely associated with the soteriological dimensions of the Christian church, the cosmic work of the Holy Spirit in his thought cannot be overlooked. Benjamin B. Warfield calls Calvin “pre-eminently the theologian of the Holy Spirit” and asserts that Calvin’s greatest contribution is to acknowledge “the sovereign working of salvation by the almighty power of the Holy Spirit.” For Calvin, the Christian church is the sole institution of God’s salvation by the Holy Spirit. However, John Bolt points out that Warfield was not adequately aware of other aspects of Calvin’s pneumatology, especially the non-soteriological and cosmic dimension of the Holy Spirit. In Bolt’s view, Calvin affirms the universal presence and the immanent activity of the Holy Spirit in God’s creation. Calvin says in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*,

...For it is the Spirit who, everywhere diffused, sustains all things, causes them to grow, and quickens them in heaven and in earth. Because he is circumscribed by no limits, he is excepted from the category of creatures; but in transfusing into all things his energy, and breathing into them essence, life, and movement, he is indeed plainly divine.

In this passage, Calvin tries to explain the profound nature of the divine relation between


63 Ibid., p. 485.


the Holy Spirit and creation. The Spirit is, for him, the author of all life and of regeneration, by his very own nature, that is, his life-giving energy. The regeneration of natural life, i.e., the continuing production of life, can be seen as one of the works of the Spirit in the cosmos. Calvin's idea of life is further explained in his commentaries on Ephesians. For him, there are two theological criteria for interpreting the notion of the life of God. One is "what is accounted life in the sight of God"; the other is "that life which God communicates to His elect by the Spirit of generation." More explicitly, Calvin explains the idea of life in terms of three categories. The first is "universal life," which is a very basic "breath" permeated in all beings. The second is "human life," which is inherited from the first human being, Adam. The third is "supernatural life," which Christians alone experience. Although life has different degrees for Calvin, the source of life is one, that is, the Spirit of God. In this sense, each of three kinds of life can be the life of God. However, this does not mean that there is no qualitative or ontological distinction between God's Spirit and other immanent spirits of the world; rather it emphasizes that the sole source of all living beings is in the life of God. Therefore, the idea of the divine immanence as the universal work of the Spirit in Calvin's thought needs to be presented without compromising God's immutable will and providential rule.

The other idea of the cosmic activity of the Spirit for Calvin, as Bolt points out, is associated with the order of God's creation. M. Eugene Osterhaven notes that Calvin sees the Spirit as active in all creation: "the creation of the universe was no less the work

of the Holy Spirit than of the Son" (*Institutes* I, xiii, 15).\(^{67}\)

For the power of the Spirit is spread abroad through all parts of the world that it may keep [God's creatures] in their state, that he may supply to heaven and earth that vigor we discern, and motion to all living creatures.... God, by the wonderful power and impulse of his Spirit, preserves that which he formed out of nothing (*Commentary on Acts* 17:28).\(^{68}\)

The Spirit animates all things in creation, prevents it from falling into chaos, and maintains the order and stability of God's creation. As God created the world, he sustains it by the cosmic work of the same Spirit. However, it is important to note that in Calvin's thought, the idea of divine immanence needs to be distinguished from that of omnipresence. Reynolds clarifies the fact that God's omnipresence for Calvin is not an item or factor in the universe. Calvin, like Aquinas, assumes the philosophical line of the Aristotelian dictum that "a substance is not present in a subject."\(^{69}\) The notion of *creatio ex nihilo* in Calvin's theology denotes the absolute ontological difference between God and creatures.

Since these theologians are the "classical theists" in the Western Christian tradition, we must acknowledge that classical theism is inclusive of universal divine presence. Classical theism is not "panentheistic," but it does anticipate panentheism and approximate it so some degree. It differs from panentheism in that it insists also on


\(^{68}\) Calvin, *Commentary on Acts*, quoted by Osterhaven *ibid.*, p. 167.

3. Two Models of Contemporary Western Christian Panentheism

In this part, I shall discuss contemporary Western Christian panentheism, focusing upon the idea of the Spirit in two panentheistic theologians, Jürgen Moltmann and Sallie McFague. Harold Wells suggests that there are two kinds of Christian

70 Besides the panentheistic interpretation of God and the world of process theology, the Hegelian and the Tillichian can be considered as two important panentheistic positions among modern theologies. The heart of Hegel's religious philosophy is the affirmation of the unity of God and the world. For Hegel, God's total separation from the world would mean the disruption of truth itself because God is inconceivable without the world: *Ohne Welt ist Gott nicht Gott*. However, Hegel's idea of God-world unity is not identical with the pantheistic oneness of Spinoza. Although there is some affinity between Hegel and Spinoza in repudiating all "transcendent" reality, the former does not go as far as the Spinozistic formula *Deus sive Natura*, which implies nature is God rather than God is in nature. Hegel defends his own doctrine of Universal Spirit or Cosmic Mind, contending that the world truly exists, but not in a final or absolute sense, since it is God alone who is ultimately real and primary. Hegel's panentheistic tenets become more obvious in his idea of appearance and the supersensible world. This idea, theologically speaking, is that God "is not the world, nor is the world God, but the world is God's appearing, God's activity of self-manifestation, appearing which is completed in man. The world, and man in it, are real only to the extent that God is in them, and their true being is in God, which is another way of saying that the finite is the appearing of the infinite and has its being in the infinite." Williamson, *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion*, quoted by McFague, *The Body of God*, p. 254; Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind (or Spirit)* (London: George Allen & Unwin; Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press Inc, 1949), translated by J. B. Baillie, pp. 180-213; Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (Guildford, London & Worcester, 1977), pp. 100-104.

Tillich explains the intimate relationship between God and the world with the notion of life. For him, God is the principle of participation and the principle of individualization. God as the divine life participates in every life and everything in the universe. The life, here, does not stand in contrast to body. Life as Spirit of God transcends the duality of body and mind, which is the all-embracing function in which all elements of the structure of being participate. Therefore, Tillich says, "the statement that God is Spirit means that life as spirit is the inclusive symbol for the divine life. It contains all the ontological elements." Here is the profound immanence of God in the world. For further discussion, see Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* Vol. I. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), pp. 241-252.
panentheistic theology today. One is trinitarian panentheism, which affirms God's universal presence and indwelling as the Spirit, while maintaining a clear distinction between God and the world, together with an unreduced christology; the other is process panentheism that offers a notion of God and the world as mutually "co-dependent." Although each position is clearly distinct from the other, especially in terms of christology, they are in concord on the question of the inter-relatedness of God as Spirit and the world. I shall first consider Moltmann's theology of the Holy Spirit as an example of trinitarian panentheism, and then go on to explain the process panentheism of Sallie McFague. This chapter will then provide a discussion of the contributions of Moltmann's and McFague's panentheistic understandings of the Spirit, which can both be seen as pneumatological advance within the Western Christian tradition.

3-1 Jürgen Moltmann

Moltmann was first notable for his *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, which argued that Christianity is essentially eschatological and must be understood as fundamentally about hope. He never loses this eschatological thrust, even in his later work. His second major volume, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, was explicitly "theology of the cross" in the tradition of Luther, emphasizing the suffering of God in Jesus Christ as suffering within the life of the triune God. A third volume of his first trilogy, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: a Contribution to Messianic

Ecclesiology, marked his work as substantially pneumatological and political, yet still fundamentally eschatological in character. The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God brought forward for special emphasis the “social Trinity,” and his panentheism began to be more visible, as he emphasized the “open Trinity,” and so the inclusion of all creation within the life of the triune God. This panentheism is fully developed in God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God and becomes even more intensively pneumatological in the Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation.

Moltmann conceives of the Holy Spirit as “the power and life of the whole creation,”72 and further explores the Spirit in the perichoretic relation between God and the world as shekinah, God’s indwelling. He sees the “world of nature as bearing the prints of the Triune God and as being the real promise of the coming Kingdom.”73 In his earlier work The Church in the Power of the Spirit, he understands the Christian church in the context of the work of the Spirit but does not confine the Spirit to the church. In his latest work on the Holy Spirit, The Spirit of Life, he devotes his full attention to developing a doctrine of the Holy Spirit within a trinitarian framework. He provides a creative interpretation of pneumatology which emphasizes the fact that the experience of the Spirit cannot be restricted to the Christian church but must be extended to the whole community of creation. His major effort in this book is to promote a holistic pneumatology in which the traditional dichotomy between Spirit and body is replaced by


73 Ibid., p. 64.
an understanding of the relation between the Spirit and life. For him, the source of the variety of life originates in the restless power of Yahweh's *ruah* and his/her indwelling *shekinah*, which is actualized further in Jesus' experience of Spirit and the church's experience of the risen Jesus Christ through the Spirit.

Moltmann's concern with a holistic pneumatology begins by rejecting the limitation of the "dialectical theology" of Barth, which stresses the divine Word and tends to dismiss the theological significance of human consciousness and experience. For him, however, human experience can be considered as one of the sources for acquiring the knowledge of God the Spirit, as he attempts to reconsider the contribution of the nineteenth century liberal and pietistic theology led by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Moltmann criticizes the exclusive claim that the Holy Spirit remains entirely on God's side, so that it can never be experienced by human beings. Barth's God as the Wholly Other is far removed from human life and experience and merely resides alone in a timeless eternity. This kind of theological transcendentalism, which predominantly appears in the theology of Karl Barth, is problematic in Moltmann's view, because it presupposes that everything comes from the revelation of God's otherness.

For example, in Barth's theology, the initiation of revelation has to come from a God who exists outside humanity, and likewise also the revelation, the Incarnate God, is never to be confused with humanity in general. Even the human acceptance of God's revelation cannot be considered as the work of human beings, but utterly as the work of God in the third mode of God's being. In this framework of thought, the Holy Spirit

74 Barth states, "the dogma of the Spirit means the knowledge, that in every respect man [woman] can only be present at God's revelation, as a servant is present at his master's action, i.e., following, obeying, imitating, serving; and that this relation is at no time
remains strictly a mode of God’s Being and self-revelation, which implies an absolute discontinuity between God’s Spirit and the spirit of human beings. Moltmann, however, tries to restore the idea that human experience as such includes a genuine experience of God arising from a continuity between the human spirit and the Spirit of God. In this way, human experience of God becomes the foundation of a human theology. As he suggests, the false alternative between divine revelation and human experience of the Holy Spirit needs to be superseded in order to construct a holistic pneumatology today.

Therefore, Moltmann rejects what he regards as Barth’s trinitarian hypostatic-modalism, in which the Son and the Holy Spirit are not distinct divine persons but two ways in which the monotheistic God the Father is revealed. The classic modalist denies that the Son and the Spirit hold a distinct personhood within the Godhead. They are portrayed instead as masks which the Father wears in his historical manifestations. This modalism is highly problematic for Moltmann, as it confines the Holy Spirit to “the mode of efficacy of the one God.” Modalism rejects the concept of “person” as a term for the reversed.” Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics Vol. 1. Part I, The Doctrine of the Word of God (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1955), p. 536.


76 Barth clearly declares a preference for the notion “mode of being” in describing the Triune God. The reason he avoids the term “person” is that it tends towards tritheism. He says, “…the man who wishes to keep it [the concept of ‘person’] throughout will scarcely find another valid argument to put alongside the undoubtedly honorable position it holds by hoary ecclesiastical and scientific usage, save that he has not a better one to put in its place.” Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics Vol. 1. Part I, The Doctrine of the Word of God, p. 412; we should note, however, that Barth did not intend to support the ancient heresy of modalism or “sabellianism,” and commentators on Barth reject Moltmann’s suggestion that his theology leans toward modalism. See W. Waite Willis, Theism, Atheism and the Doctrine of the Trinity (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholar Press, 1987), pp. 153-181.

77 Moltmann, The Spirit of Life, p. 13
nature and role of the members of the Trinity. For Moltmann, the distinctive personhood of the Holy Spirit is important if we are to grasp that God's Being corresponds to a social and communitarian perspective on humanity and nature. In this respect, he seeks to remove every residue of theological subordinationism, and all forms of modalism in favor of a social and relational view of the Triune God.

Moltmann's trinitarian understanding of God locates the Spirit in the inter-relational fellowship, koinonia. In this respect, the inner being of the Holy Spirit refers to relational sociality. He speaks of the Spirit of trinitarian fellowship, who functions to confer the fellowship of the community. He explains,

In the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit the triune God himself is an open, inviting fellowship in which the whole creation finds room: 'That they also may be in us,' prays the Johannine Christ (John 17:21). The fellowship of the Holy Spirit 'with you all' (2 Cor. 13:13) corresponds to his fellowship with the Father and the Son.78

For Moltmann, the Spirit of life is always identical with the Spirit of koinonia. The "fellowship" is perceived not only as a special gift of the Spirit but also as her essential nature and character. Just as fellowship means a reciprocal relationship that involves opening oneself to the other and moving into mutual participation and recognition, the Spirit as koinonia plays a significant role in creating the fellowship and sustaining it with the Father and the Son. In this sense, a major role of Spirit is to relate the Father and the Son in order to constitute a trinitarian community or fellowship, and to bring that community into the fellowship of the entire universe that is the origin and the ultimate

78 Ibid., pp. 218-219.
purpose of all creation. In other words, the Spirit works by joining disparate living entities into koinonia and replicates the social experience of the triune God throughout the world. In fulfilling this role, the Spirit is seen in the wide spectrum of such rich metaphors as Lord, Mother, and Judge (personal metaphors), Energy, Space, and Gestalt (formative metaphors), Tempest, Fire, and Love (movement metaphors), Light, Water, and Fertility (mystical metaphors). Drawing upon these striking images of the Spirit, Moltmann describes the trinitarian personhood of the Spirit as "the loving, self-communicating, out-fanning and out-pouring presence of the eternal divine life of the triune God." The essential personality of the Spirit lies in the inner-trinitarian relations with the Father and the Son. Within this pneumatological framework, the immanent and transcendent, the historical and eschatological, the externally active and the inner-trinitarian aspects of the Spirit, are fully elaborated.

Moltmann’s trinitarian pneumatology also has important ecumenical implications, in particular in relation to the issue of the filioque controversy. Filioque is a Latin word meaning "and from the Son." This was added to the article of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which attributes the procession of the Holy Spirit to the Father only, in order to affirm that the Spirit proceeds simultaneously from the Father and

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid., pp. 269-285
81 Ibid., p. 289
83 Heron, The Holy Spirit, p. 74.
from the Son. The legitimacy of this addition has been a theological issue between Eastern and Western Christianity. Moltmann provides an attempt at an ecumenical pneumatology, one which seeks to reconnect the churches of East and West. His theological observations on the *filioque* offer common ground for those who insist on the view that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son (the Western perspective), and those who insist that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son (the Eastern perspective).

For Moltmann, the *filioque* addition to the Nicene Creed is superfluous and tautological. He explains that the Spirit proceeding from the Father means that She proceeds from the Father of the Son, because only through his relation to the Son can the First Person of the Trinity be called the Father. In this connection, God’s fatherhood is automatically preserved. In other words, “as soon as God is called Father, he is thought of as having a Son.”

84 To take the argument a step further, the fatherhood cannot coexist without the sonship of the Son. Thus, it is correct to say that the Son participates in the procession of the Spirit from his Father. This can also be interpreted as meaning the Spirit receives her hypostatic divinity from the reciprocal relationship of the Father and the Son, and carries her own “inner-trinitarian Gestalt.”

85 In Moltmann’s theology, the concept of the Trinity is not simply an abstract idea, but the living relational community of God in which God’s creational, incarnational, and eschatological life and work become possible.


85 Ibid.
This trinitarian pneumatology, which stresses the interrelatedness of the bodily, political and environmental dimensions of the Christian experience of the Spirit, has significant ethical implications in terms of social and communal relations in the world. The universal activity of the Spirit, working as a relational and liberating power, does not shy away from issues of domination and discrimination, but embraces the reality of human and ecological suffering. Moltmann is intensely aware of the God-negating destructive power of racial, sexual, and cultural subjugation, political tyranny, economic oppression, the destruction of human rights, and ecological crisis. The Spirit suffers with suffering people and the suffering of all creatures, and thus the experience of suffering is part of life in the Spirit. In this context, Moltmann explores the experiences of a wide range of liberation movements, suffering people, and ecology.

It is important to note here that the suffering Spirit is disclosed in Jesus’s death on the cross. The Spirit suffers in his crucifixion and brings him up out of death. The Spirit creates eschatological expectations in the community through signs of hope and struggle. For Moltmann, without the “pneumatology of the cross,” any panentheistic interpretation of God becomes “pure illusion.”86 His panentheism is saved from nihilism by his grounding it in the reality of the cross. Jesus’s cross and the discipleship of Christ, in which Christians take up their own crosses, are the true criteria for spiritual discernment where evil spirits, demons and anti-life powers do exist in both personal and social life. Emphasizing that the reciprocal relation between christology (the Son) and pneumatology (the Spirit) is a fundamental principle of Christian theology, Moltmann attends to the foundation of a Reformed doctrine of the Christian life by following the classical ordo

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86 Ibid., p. 213.
salutis, aligned with the concept of life. He tries to utilize this dogmatic schema in relation to the soteriological motif of liberation as exodus and resurrection. Thus, justification, regeneration, sanctification, charismatic empowerment, and mysticism always need to be considered in relation to the soteriological model of liberation. This pneumatological recovery of the ordo salutis challenges both pietistic privatization and the spiritual anemia of theological liberalism. Moltmann claims that in this way the extreme consequences of both "christomonism" and "eucharistic pneumatomania"87 can be avoided.

In connection with the issue of human and ecological liberation, Moltmann's panentheistic vision of the Spirit is further emphasized. In that his pneumatology portrays the Spirit as immanent transcendence, the two characterizations of the relation of God to the world are not contradictory.88 One is the experience of God in all things; the other is the experience of all things in God. The former stands over against a theological transcendentalism, which assumes that everything comes from God's otherness. The transcendence of God, in the words of Moltmann, is immanent in all things in the world, and can be inductively discovered. He explains this perspective as "infinite in the finite, the eternal in the temporal, and the enduring in the transitory."89 For him, presenting God's presence in nature already indicates the idea of God's immanent transcendence.

87 Ibid., p. 72.
89 Moltmann, The Spirit of Life, p. 35.
The latter, the experience of all things in God, leads us to speak of the transcendent immanence. This means moving from “the all-embracing horizon of the world and perception to the individual things which appear against this background,” a process which invites us to perceive “the finite in the infinite, the temporal in the eternal, and the evanescent in what endures.” Human experience of the world blends with the experience of God, and reverence for life becomes part of the adoration of God. In this context of thought, human beings enter lovingly into relationships with God, and therefore God can in no way be described as an “unmoved Mover.” Rather God is deeply aware of human feelings and has knowledge of all human and ecological sufferings.

As we have seen, Moltmann is critical of traditional descriptions of God’s total transcendence and alienation from human life. He argues that his idea and experience of God’s transcendence is incompatible with Karl Barth’s *Wholly Other* (*ganz Andere*) or Rudof Otto’s notion of *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum* (fascinating and terrifying mystery). Rather, his recognition of God derives from God’s *kenosis*, which is not a self-alienation of God but the self-emptying of God because of her/his love. It is the divine mystery which is transcendent yet immanent in this world. This is analogous to the experience of the Spirit as the maternal womb from which all of life is born, grows and is nourished. Moltmann emphasizes that the Spirit is not only the source of life but is also the transcendent, eschatologically and christologically-determined source for the ultimate revitalization of creation. These trinitarian and eschatological concepts of God as dwelling among God’s people, in God’s Christ and through God’s life-giving Spirit, are

90 Ibid., p. 36.

foundational for his panentheistic interpretation of God the Spirit. Moltmann proposes his vision of panentheism as follows:

The *ruah* is certainly present only when and where God wills it to be so; but with his will towards creation it is also present in everything, and keeps all things in being and in life. When we think about the *ruah* we have to say that God is in all things, and all things are in God though this does not mean making God the same as everything else.92

In Moltmann’s panentheism, the Spirit is the divine breath of life that fills everything with its own life, and which bridges the difference between creator and creature. The one God who created the world through her/his life-giving breath always enters into the continual communication and relationship between God and the world. In this way, Moltmann differentiates the way in which the world dwells in God from that in which God dwells in the world. He clearly differentiates his panentheism from pantheism, in which the distinction between transcendence and immanence is dissolved.

Moltmann emphasizes that his panentheism is utterly different from Aristotle’s philosophy. He states, “the Creator is not an unmoved Mover of the universe”93. Aristotelian “substance” or “essence” ontology, in his view, contributes much to the emergence of present ecological problems. In fact, Moltmann’s antidote to classical theism is the “revolutionary conception of a suffering God” which is opposed to the traditional portrayal of God as an all-powerful, invulnerable Creator and Ruler. He argues,

93 Moltmann, *God in Creation*, p. 87.
...a God who cannot suffer is poorer than any [hu]man. For a God who is incapable of suffering is a being who cannot be involved. Suffering and injustice do not affect him. And because he is so completely insensitive, he cannot be affected or shaken by anything. He cannot weep, for he has no tears. But the one who cannot suffer cannot love either. So he is a loveless being. Aristotle’s god cannot love; he can only be loved by all non-divine beings by virtue of his perfection and beauty, and in this way draw them to him. The ‘unmoved Mover’ is a ‘loveless Beloved.’

Here, Moltmann obviously does not attempt to maintain the lineage of Aristotelian theologies, which portray God as a self-subsistent and static being. For him, the loveless Beloved is an impersonal God who is incapable of having an intimate personal relationship with creatures, and thus, remains merely a metaphysical abstraction. In laying stress on the suffering face of God, Moltmann takes the event of the crucifixion as a starting point for a revision of traditional theology. The question of God’s immutability and perfection, he contends, needs to be reinterpreted from the crucifixion. For him, the cross is the supreme manifestation of God’s reconciling love and self-giving action. In Moltman’s words, to manifest faithfulness and unceasing love in history, God chooses to relate her/himself to the world, so that the divine identity resides in the world. God’s unconditional love and faithfulness has its roots in the divine nature, which causes her/himself to be immanent in the world. The cross is, in Moltmann’s panentheism, interpreted in terms of a radical self-differentiation in God, which is the exemplification of the supreme paradox of God as a living unity of life and death. In the separation and


alienation of God from her/himself on the cross, the unity is maintained through the
loving and reconciling bond of the Spirit of life.

Moltmann has no enthusiasm for metaphysical arguments about the causality of
the God-world relation. He rather intends to focus on the practical dimension of his
panentheism, stressing the immanence of God through the Spirit, and a cosmic
eschatology. He rejects the notion of causality from his doctrine of creation as follows:

If we are to follow the concept of God's transcendence in relation to the
world with an understanding of his divine world-immanence it is
advisable to eliminate the concept of causality from the doctrine of
creation, and indeed we have to stop thinking in terms of causation at all;
for the causality approach allows us to conceive only of the transcendence
of the divine causa prima which, since it is divine must also be causa sui;
but creating the world is something different from causing it.96

In rejecting the use of the causal analysis and the theistic unchanging God of
Aristotle, Moltmann adopts a Jewish doctrine of God's "self-limitation (zimsum)." This
describes God's creation as a kind of contraction and expansion of the divine substance
itself by the movement of self-limitation and self-extension.97 Here, creation is the
movement of God's self-limitation and withdrawal to allow "space" for the world's
existence. Yet Moltmann affirms the idea of creatio ex nihilo98 as the initial divine
creation without any prior conditions. This creation produces a creatio mutabilis, an
"open system," operating to surpass its origin in the future.99 Here, Moltmann envisages

97 Ibid., pp. 86-93.
98 Moltmann, God in Creation, pp. 78-79.
99 Richard Bauckham, The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark,
1995), p. 188.
that God's creation is not static but dynamic, which continues to develop toward the eschatological consummation of the kingdom of glory. The importance of the creatio ex nihilo is, for him, the anticipation of the eschatological vision of the new creation. In other words, creatio ex nihilo in the beginning announces the Creator's openness for overcoming death and the promise of the redeeming annihilatio nihili. Moltmann clearly distinguishes his panentheism from that of process theologians and of McFague by emphasizing that while God is in creation, and creation in God, creation itself cannot be divine. For him, creation comes from God and depends on God.

As we have seen, Moltmann's understanding of God follows along the lines of the Western definition of panentheism: God is in all things and all things are in God, yet God is more than the universe. As other panentheists in both philosophical and theological circles have done, his perception of God also contributes to the doctrine of the Spirit, which assumes cosmic proportions with the idea of the "Spirit of life." Moltmann extends the cosmic dimension of the Spirit's work to other realms of being beyond the human and Christian. The "Holy Spirit" is, in the minds of many, merely the Spirit of the church. In Moltmann's conceptuality, the transcendent aspect of God is not missing, but it is experienced through immanence, namely, the notion of the immanent transcendence of the Spirit as the "power of creation and the wellspring of life."Moltmann, God in Creation, p. 90.

However, his universal affirmation of the Spirit becomes somewhat ambiguous in certain aspects. For example, he says, "spirituality means life in God's Spirit, and a living relationship with God's Spirit. Talk about Eastern or African spirituality

100 Moltmann, God in Creation, p. 90.

101 Ibid., p. 35.
Unfortunately blurs this precise sense of the word and reduces it again to 'religiousness.' In this passage, he implies that non-Christian spirituality does not involve life in the Spirit or rest on a living relationship with the same Spirit. Does this mean, then, that non-Christian spirituality is not an authentic relation to the life-giving Spirit which derives from the living relationship with Yahweh's living breath, but a mere ritual performed for the sake of religiousness? Does he not understand that non-Christian spirituality, including that in Eastern or African cultures, works with the presence of the Spirit, which permeates all spheres of life? Although, in other places, he attempts to identify the Holy Spirit with other cultural expressions of Spirit like ch'i (ki), his preoccupation with the Christian trinitarian faith in God leads him to have only a partial awareness of the reality of the Ultimate of other religious contexts. He says, "...we call it [the divine Spirit] the cosmic Spirit, because it is the life in everything that lives. Chinese call it ch'i [ki], Greek eros, Hebrew ruah." However, his notion of the cosmic Spirit is grounded in the monotheistic model of God, who is the Creator.

It is interesting to note here that Moltmann's pneumatology and trinitarian idea of Creator and creation is further qualified by the employment of Neo-Platonic terms in

102 Ibid., p. 83.

103 Ibid., p. 227. It is true that Moltmann is not a "pluralist" in the sense of e.g. Paul Knitter, John Hick, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Moltmann makes specific Christian truth claims, and thinks that the truth in Christ is unique and incomparable. For him, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the unique truth yet he wishes to be open to truth and wisdom elsewhere. The Spirit who is the Spirit of the triune God and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is universal and not limited to Christianity and the Church. For further discussion, see Moltmann, "Is 'Pluralistic Theology' Useful for the Dialogue of World Religions?" in Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions; Wells, "Holy Spirit and Theology of the Cross," Theological Studies 53/3 (1992), pp. 476-492.

104 Despite his disavowal of "monotheism" in The Crucified God.
explanation of the nature of the relationship between God and the world. Moltmann adopts the Neo-Platonic language of “emanation” of all things from the “All-One,” and their “remanation” into the All-One. This is in accordance with his panentheistic vision of the world in God and God in the world: “everything is one, and one is everything in God.”

However, is this “emanationist” idea compatible with creatio ex nihilo? It seems that while Moltmann basically affirms creatio ex nihilo in order to avoid the divinization of creation, he wants to acknowledge an element of truth in Neo-Platonic emanationism,—i.e. the creation arises out of the being and energy (Spirit) of God. For him, the divinization of creation leads to pantheistic “indifferentism” regarding good and evil. In my view, Moltmann employs some of Neo-Platonic ideas eclectically in order to reflect contemporary ecological needs, without compromising his position of creatio ex nihilo.

For the explication of this intimate relation of God and the world, Moltmann takes three biblical metaphors—the fruit of the tree, the source, and the light. For him, the tree which bears fruit, the light which shines and provides warmth to all beings, and the source as the “well of life” which flows wherever the eternal Spirit indwells, are ways in which the language of his holistic pneumatology finds expression. The life-giving Spirit is “poured out” on all beings and things (Joel 2:28 / Acts 2:16) and fills God’s creation with eternal life by dwelling in them. Drawing upon these images of the divine energy that interpenetrates all the myriad of things in the world, he describes “the movement of the Spirit as the torrent of energies flowing from God to human beings and nature.”

105 Ibid., p. 211.

106 Ibid., p. 177.
This implies that there is the possibility for a radical union of the world with God, a union which challenges the traditional Christian monotheistic concept of God. In identifying mystical metaphors with the Spirit of life, the bond between God and the world, subject and object, and eternal and temporal, is achieved in the “perichoretic interpenetration” of the creation and the Spirit. This does not mean that Moltmann attempts to reduce the Holy Spirit to human dimensions; rather he extends the realm of experience to embrace the reality of the immanent transcendence of God the Spirit.

3-2 Sallie McFague

In Sallie McFague’s earlier work, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*,¹⁰⁷ she emphasizes the non-literal character of all human theological language, which is always inadequate to the divine mystery. In *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*,¹⁰⁸ McFague argues that traditional theology has been dominated by a dualistic and monarchical model of God in which s/he is portrayed as an absolute King or Ruler who is essentially unrelated to the world. She continues her quest for a metaphorical theology in her important volume *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*,¹⁰⁹ which stands in the tradition and legacy of religious ecofeminism. McFague’s criticism of the classical metaphors of God is carried forward in her latest book, *Super, Natural Christians* in which she claims that the traditional model of God

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¹⁰⁹ McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,
and the world is based a subject-object model which assumes a hierarchical dualism of one over the other, concentrating too much upon the transcendence of God. Starting from her conviction that the critical ethical issue of our day is ecological, she suggests an alternative model and metaphor of God which is more appropriate and morally responsible in today's context. She advises us to "free our Western, spiritualized, body-hating minds" for the sake of a new way of viewing the world, and a transformed understanding of God, reconceptualizing the relation between God and the world. To this end, it is necessary to articulate new models of God that reflect greater global relevance, deeper ethical agency, and holistic divine-human reciprocity.

McFague's corrective model of God is an imaginative but careful presentation of divine immanence, which describes God as the Spirit of life embodied in the universe. The Spirit, for her, is also the source of life, the breath of creation, and the renewal or direction of life for all the bodies in the world, embraced by God's inclusive love. She depicts the world as the "body of God," a picture in which God is imagined in a corporeal manner. McFague begins her argument for the necessity of an alternative model of God by pointing out the epistemological limitations of human beings. She reminds us of the dialogue between God and Moses. When Moses asks God to show her/his glory, God answers, "...and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen" (Ex

1993).

110 McFague, *Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), pp. 30-39. She suggests here an alternative model, namely, "subject-subjects model," which says that "I am a subject and live in a world of many other different subjects." This model, she argues, is a relational model derived from the evolutionary, ecological picture of reality underscoring both radical unity and individuality.
Her meditation upon this passage leads her to the insight that we human beings are merely able to glimpse the divine reality. The Holy One is embodied, yet only partially available to us. As with Moses, neither the face nor the full glory of God is visible or knowable to any creature. In this respect, all human perceptions or experiences of God are incomplete and partial, and, therefore, necessarily metaphorical. Metaphorical language, she contends, presents tentative and exploratory theological models, none of which can be treated as directly descriptive of the divine.\textsuperscript{112} It is always “God’s back” and not “God’s face” that we are given to see. This useful metaphor is, for her, a hermeneutical basis for a more ethically responsible faith for the human species and other ecological communities. Accordingly, it is important to have a more sophisticated awareness of the world, and to explore or to create alternative metaphors for the Ultimate reality or God, which both calls for human responsiveness and effectively overcomes the present life-destroying realities of the global human-ecological community.

McFague points out the inadequacy of such traditional models of God as the “royalist, monarchical model,” which separates God from the world in an “asymmetrical dualism.”\textsuperscript{113} She states,

The primary metaphors in the tradition are hierarchical, imperialistic, and dualistic, stressing the distance between God and the world and the total reliance of the world on God. Thus, metaphors of God as king, ruler, lord, master, and governor, the concepts that accompany them of God as absolute,

\textsuperscript{111} McFague, \emph{The Body of God}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{112} For further discussion of metaphorical language, see McFague, \emph{Metaphorical Theology}.

\textsuperscript{113} McFague, \emph{The Models of God}, pp. 63-78.
complete, transcendent, and omnipotent permit no sense of mutuality, shared responsibility, reciprocity, and love.\textsuperscript{114}

In her view, the traditional approaches, which imagine God as an external architect, no longer fit well with our present scientific understanding of the world; nor are they responsive to the primary needs of our time.\textsuperscript{115} Triumphal, monarchical and patriarchal metaphors for the God-world relationship are opposed to the continuation and fulfillment of life, and, therefore, need to be “remythologized” by more caring and inclusive metaphors that call us to a “new world sensibility” and support the depth and breadth of divine-human interdependence.\textsuperscript{116}

As an alternative, McFague explores the “agential-organic model,”\textsuperscript{117} which she believes to be suited to the postmodern situation. She pursues the organic model as a heuristic device for suggesting a new way of conceiving God’s relation to the world. The major aim of this model is to recognize the importance of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all bodies in creation. She contends that ecologically responsible theology needs to begin with the recovery and development of an agential-organic model of the world as the body of God. The core idea of this also follows along the lines of the Western definition of panentheism: \textit{God is in all things and all things are in God, yet God is more than the universe.}

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{115} McFague, \textit{The Body of God}, pp. 136-139.
\textsuperscript{116} McFague, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., pp. 139-141.
In an agential model, God is imagined to be an agent whose inexhaustible and inclusive love is experienced throughout human history. Divine action in the world is assumed to be realized by its bodies, that is, human and ecological communities. God's action in the world is supposed to be realized through these; in other words, it is analogous to the way human beings move their bodies in accordance with their minds. This perspective denotes an anthropomorphism which views the human being as the prototype for divine action. This agential characteristic of God is further elaborated according to an organic model of God, and this combination is particularly important, in her view, for neither model alone is adequate as a response to the reality of the current global context. The agential model alone carries a strong tendency to overstress the transcendent power of God at the expense of the world, whereas the organic model tends to identify God with the world.\(^{118}\)

The organic model, she explains, has firm roots in Christian tradition, but mainline theology has not been comfortable with that idea because of its pantheistic tenets. She, too, clearly distinguishes her panentheism from pantheism, concluding that panentheism is "a strong motif in both Hebrew and Christian traditions that take seriously the mediation of God to the world."\(^{119}\) Although McFague emphasizes the radical immanence of God in her model, she does not reduce the mysterious nature of God's independence from the world. The agential-organic model is well placed in the scope of panentheism as she defines it: "everything that is is in God and God is in all things and yet God is not identical with the universe, for the universe is dependent on God in a way

\(^{118}\) Ibid., p. 141.

\(^{119}\) Ibid., p. 150.
that God is not dependent on the universe." Panentheism seems to take a middle way between classical theism, which claims God's total disembodiment, and pantheism which, on the contrary, speaks of the complete identity of God and the world. Differing from both of these, panentheism denotes God's partial embodiment. God is sacramentally, rather than necessarily or totally embodied. In this framework of panentheism, God cannot collapse into the world, for God's transcendence must be preserved.

Nevertheless, the notion of God's transcendence is different from that in classical theism; her view is developed in terms of embodiment. That is, all the humble bodies of our own planet are visible signs of an invisible grandeur. McFague's understanding of transcendence seems congenial to Hartshorne's notion of "dual transcendence," which promotes the relational nature of the divine-human reality. Based on this notion of transcendence, McFague also argues that there are real relations between the mundane and the divine reality and not just among the three members of the Holy Trinity itself. In this way, God is depicted as the totally interrelated and interdependent Spirit (breath of life) of the body (the world, universe) rather than as the supreme cause or mind which directs or governs the whole world.

120 McFague, Ibid., p. 149.

121 For Hartshorne, the idea of an impassible and immutable God can be retained, though only as an aspect of the divine life in its fullness through the world. He explains further: "God is exalted above the other realities not as cause, surpasses effect, or unity, plurality, or being, becoming; but rather as eminent cause surpasses ordinary causes, and eminent effect, ordinary effects; similarly, as eminent being and becoming surpass ordinary being or becoming, or eminent unity and plurality surpass ordinary unity and plurality." Charles Hartshorne, Insights and Oversights of Great Thinkers: An Evaluation of Western Philosophy (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1983), pp. 314-315.
Concerning the christological implications of this model, McFague claims that God's spiritual presence is not only in Jesus but in all bodies of God. The life of Jesus is held up as a paradigm of the preferential option for the poor and oppressed, including both humans and nature, an option that McFague regards as essential if cosmic salvation is to be achieved. The cosmic Christ as present in the struggle to liberate the universe and the resurrection of Jesus are interpreted as symbolic of the fulfillment of all created bodies.\textsuperscript{122} The life-giving elements demonstrated in Jesus' life, his death on the cross, and the affirmation of God's continued presence evidenced in the resurrection story, are taken to be models for understanding how God relates in a life-affirming manner to the universe. In this sense, the story of Jesus is taken to be the paradigmatic embodiment of the divine presence in the world and, as McFague contends, an adequate Christian theology will demonstrate not conformity to, but demonstrable continuity with, the paradigm as it is expressed in the story of Jesus.

While McFague finds the agential-organic model transformative in the direction of a greater inclusivity, reciprocity, and interdependence, the metaphor of the world as God's body provides a solid foundation for expanding ethical obligation beyond the anthropocentric to the cosmic life-centric. This alternative model encourages not only decentering the anthropocentric assumption that human beings are the owners or the major tenants of the world, but also foregrounds the cosmic life-centred idea that human beings are God's partners as co-creators who always participate in this ongoing creative activity.

\textsuperscript{122} McFague, \textit{The Body of God}, pp. 159-195.
McFague's new model and metaphor are conceptually based on two philosophical traditions, which are, as she explains them, process philosophy and Teilhard de Chardin's thought. She says that her theological construction is a continuation and application of these two metaphysical legacies. In particular, Whitehead's dipolar theism seems foundational to her argument for the radicalization of God's transcendence and immanence. McFague attempts to modify his process panentheism in a theological sense.

She adopts Whitehead's dipolar nature of God; one is the primordial nature of God, and the other the consequent nature of God. The primordial nature is associated with the transcendent aspect of God, which is pure potentiality and cannot be conditioned by the world or any other actual entities. Whitehead says, "He (God), in his primordial nature is unmoved by love for this particular or that particular."

The consequent nature of God is connected to his immanent aspect in the concrete matters of fact in this world. God's consequent nature is characterized by the fact that God is finite, temporal, and responsive, referring to his concreteness in the actual world. Although these two poles seem, at first glance, incompatible with one another, due to his separate treatment of them, they are merely poles of one actual entity working as a tool of the conceptual polarity in Whitehead's metaphysical scheme. For example, his notion of the primordial nature of God is not totally identical with the traditional conception of God who is perceived as the infinite, eternal, and unchanging Being. Whitehead contends that the primordial or mental pole alone cannot be a full description of God. He rather speaks of the immanence of the primordial nature, an immanence that certainly attenuates God's

123 Ibid., pp. 140-141.

transcendence. For him, God’s primordial nature is not necessarily meant to be exclusive of the world. God has never been pure potential, because potentiality, he argues, has to be actualized or embodied in some actual occasion. In this sense, the primordial nature maintains a constant engagement with the consequent nature, and therefore, becomes immanent in the world. This idea points to an intimate two-way relationship between God and the world without completely eliminating the distinction between them. The consequent or physical nature of God is also rooted in the primordial nature, so that God exists as an organic whole. Though Whitehead does not explicitly mention the metaphor of the universe as God’s body, he tends to identify the connection of the two natures of God with the intimate relationship of God with the world.  

In fact, the metaphor of God’s body is taken up by later process thinkers like Charles Hartshorne. They attempt to interpret Whitehead’s alternative dipolar-organic thinking by recourse to that analogy in which the body is presented as God’s material self-actualization. God is then immanent in the sense that he is the supreme example of self-creativity. In other words, God creates the world because he requires a body in order to attain self-consciousness.

Embracing the process panentheistic interpretation of God and the world, McFague portrays God as the “inspired body” or “embodied spirit” of the universe in which all bodies of the creation become “intimations” of God. She promotes a Spirit

125 Ibid., pp. 104-106.


127 Reynolds explains that this point relates to Whitehead’s doctrine of consciousness in Process and Reality, p. 284. See Reynolds, Towards a Process Pneumatology, p. 31.
theology by depicting God as the “empowering, continuing breath of life throughout its billions of years of history and in each and every entity and life-form on every star and planet.”\textsuperscript{128} With this understanding, she breaks with the immense tradition according to which there is no genuine mutual interaction between God and the universe and with the conventional understanding of God's sovereign nature as self-subsistent and independent from the fate of the world.

However, since the metaphor of the universe as God's body evokes God's radical sensitivity to all things, the problem of evil in this model needs to be clarified. If the world is God's body, and if God is also “Being embodied,” as McFague emphasizes, how then can evil or sinful nature be understood in relation to the idea of God's immanence? If her notion of transcendence is presented only in the context of divine immanence, how can she defend the implication in her metaphor of the world as God's body that evil also exists within God? The real difficulty here is how evil can be included within God without making God sinful. Harold Wells points out this problem, asserting that McFague's metaphor, the universe as God's body, is not a “radicalization of incarnation” but a “de-radicalization” or a “domestication of incarnation.” Her approach, Wells argues, is closer to a pantheistic interpretation of God and the world, and, consequently, carries profoundly conservative implications, tending to divinize the world, which includes the whole creaturely realm of evil and sin. Such implications, he notes, are contrary to the whole ethical intention of her metaphorical, panentheistic theology.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{128} McFague, \textit{The Body of God}, p. 155.

Although McFague attempts to maintain both God's autonomous identity and her/his intrinsic relationship with the world, she does not explicitly explain in what manner God can be freed from the dark face of nature. How can a God who creates the world in which so much evil and oppression exist also be the one who loves it and is embodied within it? Here, unresolved tensions occur in relation to the issue of creation and redemption. The unity of these is not easily reconciled with human experience, and consequently, a fuller examination of the shadow side of the metaphor of the world as God's body needs to be given.

3-3 A Dialogue between Moltmann and McFague

We have looked at the major features of the two contemporary theologians' pneumatologies which can be seen as panentheistic. As we have seen, Moltmann offers a trinitarian and eschatological panentheistic interpretation of the Spirit, seeking a correspondence between the fellowship of the Trinity as three distinct persons and the fellowship of creation, whereas McFague emphasizes the radical immanence of God as embodied spirit of the universe, with a focus on the relational aspect of God and the world. Both of these pneumatologies reflect a sensitive awareness of the inadequacy of classical theism, which alienates God from the world. Their comprehensive theological articulations of a global search for a new spirituality and a more holistic way of looking at the intimate relation between God and the world are highly relevant and significant contributions for our time. In this world of economic injustice, Third World poverty, dominant Western culture, and ecological devastation, their eloquent pleas for a
liberating and holistic spirituality and the universal affirmation of life are enormously valuable today.

Although both Moltmann and McFague propose the revision of classical theism, there are some important theological differences between them. For example, for Moltmann, it is the “divine absoluteness” which embraces the idea of relativity, whereas for McFague, it is the “divine relativity” that includes the notion of absoluteness. The theological background of Moltmann’s trinitarian panentheism is profoundly associated with the notion of an absolute, eschatological, and yet dynamic Spirit. McFague’s pneumatology is more in a pantheistic direction although she distinguishes her panentheism from pantheism, while Moltmann’s pneumatology is more in a theistic direction.

In Moltmann’s panentheism, the idea of divine absoluteness lies in the conceptual assumption that the absolute Spirit works in a constant dialectical moment. First, the absolute Spirit of Life, who is in and for herself, exists in eternity prior to the creation of the world and apart from the world. That is, the triune God exists eternally and creation arises from God ex nihilo. Secondly, God creates the world of nature and humanity with the breath of life which then becomes alienated from Godself because of the sin of humanity. Thirdly, in the process of reconciliation through Jesus Christ, God’s word and wisdom becomes incarnate (en-fleshed) by the power of the Spirit, and brings all things into union with Godself.130 This enfleshment in humanity, and subsequent indwelling of

the Spirit in human beings is understood as an expression of God’s utter agape (self-giving Love).

Moltmann conceives of the Spirit of Life as revealing herself through the physical and mutable world, emphasizing the trinitarian process of the self-actualization of the Spirit. Here, the idea of absolute or transcendent Spirit, in his pneumatology, cannot be seen in the traditional sense of God’s transcendent immutability or perfection but has to do with God’s immanence and triune self-relatedness. In fact, this interpretation of the transcendence of the Spirit is quite congenial with that of McFague. For Moltmann, God as the Spirit is an “actual being in and for itself” but in and through the reality of the world, not as a separated entity. In this sense, Moltmann moves away from the fundamental tenet of the divine immutability of classical theism. Moltmann’s God is a “social Trinity” of the three persons living in an eternal and equal communion of love. This triune God is given to creation, indwells creation, and takes creation up into his/herself; all creatures are “gathered into the open trinity.”

With respect to holding the relational notion of the transcendence of God as the Spirit, McFague’s panentheism is similar to Moltmann’s. However, some distinctive features are apparent in her idea of a relational God. Moltmann views the world as being dependent upon God, while God is not dependent on the world. McFague’s panentheism,

Ecological and Philosophical-Scientific Perspective (Roderer Verlag, Regensburg: Theorie und Forschung, Bd. 530, 1998), pp. 102-104.

131 Moltmann, God in Creation, p. 242; The Crucified God, p. 246.
however, implies that God and the world exist for the sake of each other, both in process and in becoming.  

Utilizing the process philosophical interpretation of the God-world relationship, McFague attempts to modify significant elements of process philosophy for the sake of a theologically satisfying concept of God as the embodied Spirit. McFague maintains that God is “supremely relative” and within her/his relativity is included the divine absoluteness as an abstract essence. For her, the nature of divine transcendence is not God’s external sovereignty over the world, but rather God’s reciprocal involvement with 

132 McFague’s panentheism, which contains the ideas of “transcendent immanence” and “immanent transcendence,” can be said to be a theological modification of Hartshorne’s dipolar panentheism. The immanent nature of God, which comprises other multitudes of God’s body is the dimension in which the divine perfection is at a concrete maximum, but not exhibited fully. There is the sense of interrelation in which the absolute aspect is related, just as the transcendent nature is related to the immanent nature and vice versa. The divine essence relates the generic identity of God to the world; this relation is elaborated in terms of the categories of possibility/actuality, contingency/necessity, and transcendence/immanence. For further discussion, see Charles Hartshorne, The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1948); Beatrice Rome and Sydney Rome, eds. Philosophical Interrogations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964); Charles Hartshorne, Reality as Social Process: Studies in Metaphysics and Religion (New York: The Free Press, 1953); The Logic of Perfection: and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics (LaSalle: Open Court, 1962).

133 Hartshorne employs the metaphor of the world as God’s body in elaborating upon the organic character of the world. He argues that God and the world are compound individual entities in which God functions as the mind or soul of the world and the world functions as the body of God. Just as a certain organ within the human body holds its own right as a substantial entity and yet is under the control of the mind or soul, human beings and other forms of life exist under God’s creative activity without losing their own autonomous rights. In other words, the soul guides all organs of the body, each of which possesses a certain independence, but not in the sense of having a full autonomy of its own. The core idea of this metaphor is to ensure the intimate and all-inclusive relationship between God and the world in which both of them cannot be outside one another. Man’s Vision of God: the Logic of Theism, p. 175; Schubert Ogden also adopts the analogy of soul and body to highlight the organic understanding of the God-world relationship. He says, “God is related to the universe of the other beings somewhat as the human self is related to its body.” See The Reality of God and Other Essays (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 59.
the world. The universe becomes both medium and concrete actuality for divine incarnation. To rephrase this idea in more theological terms: for McFague, there is no way to divine transcendence except through the immanence of God, hence, her insistence on the paradoxical expressions “transcendent immanence” and “immanent transcendence” of God is McFague’s version of panentheistic pneumatology.

Secondly, although both Moltmann and McFague articulate a “Spirit Christology,” their pneumatological christologies differ significantly. In Moltmann’s christology, the intimate and reciprocal relationship between the “Christ of the Spirit” and “the Spirit of Christ” is highlighted. Christ as the “recipient of the Spirit” is balanced by Christ as the “sender of the Spirit.” For him, the proclaimed Jesus Christ cannot be diminished to the historical Jesus, nor can the proclamation of Christ be reduced to the proclamation of Jesus in pneumatology. He contends that the work and the operation of the Holy Spirit is the “precondition” or “premise” for the event of Jesus of Nazareth. He intentionally emphasizes that God’s ruah necessarily complements dabar (Word of God), so that logos christology needs to be complemented by Spirit Christology. Thus he develops “Spirit” or “pneumatological Christology” in The Way of Jesus Christ. Moltmann’s trinitarian pneumatology is closer to christocentrism rather than to theocentrism. Although he claims that his pneumatology preserves a theocentric perspective, which renounces both christocentrism and pneumatocentrism, his christocentric position becomes more obvious in his pneumatology as it faces the issue of

136 Ibid., p. 72.
the criterion of spiritual discernment. He emphatically insists on the doctrine of solus Christus, which is, for him, the true criterion for discerning between the Holy Spirit and other spirits. Reducing the importance of the Spirit of Christ to the event of the cross and resurrection, however, cannot be tolerated in his pneumatology, for he will subsequently connect the Holy Spirit with non-Christian spirits. Yet he clearly states,

...Nor can a cosmic doctrine of the Holy Spirit become animistic or pay homage to New Age pantheism or Buddhism: Jesus makes a difference. I have never placed this at all in question. If anyone sees or has another criterion for discerning between the spirits, it cannot be—in my opinion—Christian: solus Christus.

The core contention of his christological pneumatology is that christology and pneumatology are mutually related in such a way that the historical interactions of the Spirit of Christ and the Christ of the Spirit are fully explored.

However, McFague does not give serious attention to the “Spirit of Christ” as Moltmann does. As we have seen earlier, the story of Jesus is, for her, a paradigmatic embodiment of the divine presence in the world. The Incarnation, “the Word become flesh,” means “lived among us,” which affirms the fully immanent Spirit of God in the world. Drawing imaginatively upon the transcendence and immanence of the Spirit in a unified way, she argues that it is an illusion of the Christian tradition that God becomes immanent only at the point of Jesus of Nazareth. This dogma is no longer appropriate in the light of postmodern cosmology. McFague’s metaphor of the cosmic Christ suggests that Jesus’ paradigmatic ministry and spirituality is not limited to a particular being, the first-century Mediterranean carpenter, nor to the church, but is available to us all through

nature. In her agential-organic model of God, McFague does not clearly differentiate the Spirit of Christ from other spirits which permeate nature in general. She states that “…the spirit that moves in creation giving breath to all bodies becomes also the spirit of Christ that wills the salvation of all bodies.” This implies that the Holy Spirit is unlimited and therefore available everywhere through other forms of bodies and spirits. The entire cosmos is filled by God’s Spirit and becomes the habitat of God, which can be known only through the mediation of the physical world.

In contrast to Moltmann’s position, McFague understands that the Spirit of God extends to include all other spirits of nature, without offering special treatment for the “Spirit of Christ.” She says that “…Jesus is one such place for Christians, but there are other paradigmatic persons and events…” Alleviating the heavy emphasis on the absolutization of Incarnation in the man Jesus of Nazareth, she creates new terms for describing the Trinity: the mystery of God (the invisible face or first person), the physicality of God (the visible body or second person), and the mediation of the invisible and the visible (the spirit or third person). Here, McFague relativizes the position of the Son and his role, which is interpreted symbolically, as one partial description or “backside” view of God. The distinctive christological implication in McFague’s pneumatology is that God’s Spirit is mediated though all bodies in the world, and we know God through divine incarnation in all of nature in the paradigmatic Jesus of

138 Ibid., p. 67.
140 Ibid., p. 162.
141 Ibid., pp. 193-194.
Nazareth; in the universe as God's body, and in the cosmic Christ. The distinction between the Holy Spirit and the profane spirit is blurred in her pneumatology, and this idea is, as she points out, more prevalent and deeply represented in other religious traditions, such as the Native, Goddess, and Buddhist traditions.\textsuperscript{142} Influenced by the alternative worldview of other religious traditions, she attempts to relativize the Incarnation of Jesus and the Spirit of Christ, a stance which is incompatible with Moltmann's christocentric pneumatology.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., p. 183.
CHAPTER THREE
KOREAN PANENTHEISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE ULTIMATE KI
(CHIGI/지기/ 至氣)

Chapter III is devoted to a discussion of the Korean panentheistic philosophy of the Ultimate Ki, Chigi, of the Korean indigenous religion, Tonghak (Eastern Learning/동학/東學). The Ultimate Ki, according to the philosophy of Tonghak, participates in all the affairs of the universe, in which ideas both of the “transcendent and personal” Hanûnim (God in Korean/하느님) and the “immanent and natural” ki (기/氣) are interfused. In this respect, the Ultimate Ki can be a major resource for contextualizing Korean Christian panentheistic pneumatology.

In order to explore the concept of the Ultimate Ki, first of all, it is necessary to examine both the philosophical and religious foundations of the Ultimate Ki. Since the concrete characteristics of the Ultimate Ki will be discussed further in a later chapter, I shall introduce the philosophical and religious backgrounds relevant to the formulation of the Ultimate Ki. Two streams of thought are at work here: The philosophical nature of ki and the religious dimension of the Korean indigenous Hanûnim faith. The coexistence of the transcendent and personal Hanûnim and the immanent and natural ki is a unique aspect of the Ultimate Ki, which needs to be distinguished from the Confucian notion of ki.

Since the Ultimate Ki is associated with East Asian development of ki (Shamanist, Taoist, Confucian traditions) the general description of ki rooted in those traditions needs

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1 Ki is a Korean pronunciation of the Chinese term ch‘i or qi (pinyin system). I shall use the word ki in my thesis except the quotation and explanation of the Chinese understanding of ki.
to be introduced prior to the study of the Ultimate *Ki*. For this, I shall categorize the concept of *ki* into three sections: Primordial Shamanist *ki*, Confucian *ki*, and Taoist *ki*, which are eventually syncretized in the idea of the Ultimate *Ki*. Since the concept of *ki* is pervasively diffused in East Asian religions, it will exceed the scope of my thesis to deal with all the different connotations of *ki* derived from each tradition. My search of the area shall be limited to where it seems relevant to the concept of the Ultimate *Ki*.

I shall then provide an understanding of the *Hanunim* faith which functions as a foundation for the religious dimension of the Ultimate *Ki*. Based on the understanding of the philosophical and religious background of the Ultimate *Ki*, a further development of the concrete characteristics of the Ultimate *Ki* will be discussed in relation to other major doctrines of *Tonghak* thought. The key feature of the Ultimate *Ki* is the combination of the faith in the transcendent and personal *Hanunim* and the philosophy of the immanent and natural *ki*, in which a distinctive Korean panentheism is to be found.

1. What is *Ki*?

1-1. The Origin and the Primordial Shamanist *Ki*

In ancient times, people in East Asia believed that Heaven and Earth, as well as all beings, breathed. In the study of *ki* philosophy, there are two points that one needs to keep in mind: one is that the word *ki* carries an exceptional variety of meanings, and, thus, is quite difficult to define in a concise way. It is a rare case in which the word *ki* is used by itself. *Ki* is almost always used as part of an idiom accompanied by other
words. The other point is the ambiguous character and the broadness of *ki* in terms of its function. In ancient times, as Fung Yu-lan points out, there was a tendency, with regard to any force that was invisible and intangible, to describe it as *ki*. Accordingly, when one says *ki*, it is important to indicate the context and the particular period to which *ki* belongs, because the concept of *ki* has been historically changed and variously interpreted by many scholars. Considering the fact of multiple meanings, connotations, and the ambiguous characteristics of *ki*, it would not be appropriate for it to be “systematized” on the model of Western philosophy.

The origin of *ki* can be traced back to the oldest material *Kapgolmun* (Oracle bone/금골문/甲骨文) which is the pictography of Chinese inscribed on the bone of animals or on the backs of turtles. The *Kapgolmun* is the original form of Chinese characters and found mostly in the historic areas of the *Shang* dynasty (c. 1766-1122 BCE). Although the same Chinese form of the word *ki* cannot be found in the *Kapgolmun*, Woo Sung-o, a Chinese linguist, estimates that the word *ki* might have originated in the number three. The word “three” carries various meanings: desire, reach, and final. However, as Maruyama Tosiyagi points out, the word three of the *Kapgolmun*...

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2 For example, there is *ki* of pleasure or *ki* of anger in relation to the appearance of a person’s *ki*. There is also *ki* of nature, such as basic *ki* or ultimate *ki*, referring to the heaven and earth and so on. Maruyama Tosiyagi, *What is Ki? [기란 무엇인가?]* (Seoul, Korea: Chôngsin Segyesa, 1989), p. 22; Also, *ruah* is used this way in the Hebrew Bible, e.g. “*ruah* of wisdom” (Is 11), etc.


5 Owing the fact that no exact or close form of the word *ki* is found, perhaps the concept of *ki* might have been developed after the *Shang* dynasty. Tosiyagi, *What is Ki?* p. 23.
was used as a single word, which constitutes the word “desire.” In this respect, it seems difficult to claim that the word three is the original form of ki.6

In Kûmmun (Golden Text/ 금문/金文),7 a later material than Kapgolmun, the word three also appears, but the argument whether the word is the original form of ki has not been resolved among Chinese linguistic scholars. However, in Kûmmun, the same form of the word ki is found which might have been written during the early Warring States period (403-221 BCE). The ki of Kûmmun implies the primitive understanding of yin and yang through describing smoke or fog rising up and down.8 Also, ki of Kûmmun is known haenggi (ki of movement/행기/行氣), related to the method of longevity and health.9

This word ki has also been translated into English in various terms as follows: ki is the “material principle,”10 “constitutive ethers,”11 “force, breath, power,”12 “ether,”13

6 Ibid., p. 24.

7 Kûmmun is kind of word inscribed in copper or iron vessels. Ibid.

8 Chang Won-suk, The Study on Suun Choe, Je-u’s Ultimate Ki [ 수문 최체우의 자기에 대한 연구], M.A. Thesis (1992), Hanshin University, pp. 15-16.


13 A. C. Graham, Two Chinese Philosophers: Ch’eng Ming-tao and Ch’eng Yi-ch’uan (London: Lund Humphries, 1958), p. 31; Fung Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy
“the great breath of the universe,” and so forth. In general, *ki*, like *ruah*, carries the meaning of wind and breath. *Ki* as “breath” opens and sustains life as an essential element for the survival of all existence. *Ki* as “wind” is also considered as the “breath” of nature. In this sense, *ki* can be called “life.” Kim Chi-ha says, “*ki* is a philosophical expression of the cosmic life.”

The primordial Shamanistic *ki* existed in relation to animistic polytheism worshipping wind, cloud, tree, and other natural phenomena. For instance, *ki*, according to *Sōlmun Haeja* (설문해자/説文解字), was described as *ungi* (cloud *ki* 운기/雲氣). The ancient Chinese had an intuitive observation that those white clouds thickly rising up one after another while repeating the activity of condensing and dispersing, are different modes of *ki*. *Ki*, related to the natural phenomena, was a pictographical expression of the primordial world.

As the distinctive aspect of the shamanistic approach to deity, the highest “God” among many other gods was always present during the primitive period. In China, for example, people call the Supreme deity *Shang-ti* (*Sangje* in Korean/상제/上帝), which means the Lord-on-High. *Sangje* was the anthropomorphic “God” who governed all the

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16 *Sōlmun Haeja* [An Explanation on Chinese Characteristics] is a most ancient Chinese text on etymological explanations of Chinese characters written in 100 BCE. Ibid., p. 25.

17 Ibid., p. 25.
nature deities, and spirits associated with the ruling house.\textsuperscript{18} However, the appearance of the highest being might imply that the religious phenomena of the ancient Chinese gradually began to evolve from polytheistic to monotheistic worship. This coincides with the united Kingship of the dynasty emerged.\textsuperscript{19} The strong king-centred government of the \textit{Shang} dynasty was based on the belief that \textit{Sangje} was the one who had the authority of appointing the King to control the world. Also, according to the \textit{Kapgolmun}, there is a word \textit{kiu} (기우/祈雨), which means praying \textit{Sangje} to send rain. These examples of the understanding of \textit{ki} were also related to faith in a personal “God.” Although the worship of a personal “God” became dominant, the polytheistic understanding of \textit{ki} still existed. Therefore, the idea of \textit{ki} in the \textit{Shang} period was developed in a transitional period in which the polytheistic worldview was gradually replaced by a monotheistic worldview.\textsuperscript{20}

1-2. The Taoist \textit{Ki}

\textbf{A. The Philosophical Taoist \textit{Ki}}

\textit{Lao Tzu}

As mentioned above, \textit{ki} (\textit{ch'i}) has an exceptional variety of meanings; it is proper, therefore, to select some parts related to \textit{ki} from two classic texts of Taoism: \textit{Lao tzu} (\textit{Tao te ching}) and \textit{Chang tzu}. In the \textit{Lao tzu}, the term \textit{ki} appears in three places, chapters 10, 42, and 55. Whereas the concept of \textit{ki} in chapters 10 and 55 is related to human life

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}

\item \textsuperscript{19} Chang Rib-mun, \textit{The Philosophy of \textit{Ki} [기요/祈雨]} (Seoul, Korea: Yemunji), pp. 39-40.

\item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
and society, that of chapter 42 is expressed as the cosmological principle of *ki*. Chapter 10 says,

> In bringing your spiritual and bodily souls to embrace the One,
> Can you never depart from it?
> In concentrating your breath (*ch'i*) to attain softness,
> Can you be like an infant?²¹

Some scholars such as Kaltenmark and Waley²² interpret this text in relation to a yoga practice, because the idea of “concentrating one’s breath (*ch'i*)” seems to indicate a method for achieving long life. However, Wing-tsit Chan points out that this interpretation is misguided. Although one attempts to draw immediately some ideas about breathing techniques from the text, the original meaning of the text has nothing to do with this. Chan suspects that some scholars have unjustifiably read it into earlier texts because breathing techniques were developed later in religious Taoism. He rather interprets it as “loving the people” and “governing the state.”²³ Ellen Chen supports his perspective by saying that the core idea of this text is “the establishment of a long-lasting society through the mystical vision of the Taoist ruler.”²⁴ Thus, *ki* is here viewed as a basic component of life which assists human beings to develop the mystical power to sustain an ideal society.

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²⁴ Chen, *The Tao Te Ching*, p. 79.
Ki in chapter 55 is more closely related to human life, and in particular, the human body. According to this chapter,

To know harmony is to know the everlasting;  
To know the everlasting is to be illuminated.  
To help life along is to bring ill portend;  
To use mind to direct the life breath (ch'i) is called the strong.

Ki in this text indicates a vital force for keeping the body alive; it is unconscious and spontaneous. When the mind overpowers ki, the flow of life, ki constricts the body and this results in early death. Thus, it is important for the Taoist to keep “emptying mind,” for spiritual cultivation.\(^\text{25}\) In chapter 42 we have a complex concept of ki, namely, \(ch\'ung-ch'i\) (충기/冲气) which carries cosmological significance. The chapter says,

Tao gives birth to one,  
One gives birth to two,  
Two gives birth to three,  
Three gives birth to ten thousand beings.  
Ten thousand beings carry yin on their backs and embrace yang in their front,  
Blending these two vital breaths (ch'i) to attain harmony.

This text constitutes Lao tzu’s cosmogony and cosmology. The One means the primordial material force, \(yuan-ch'i\) (원기/元氣) which describes the undifferentiated state of the Tao, whether it descends and actualizes. The two indicates \(yin\) and \(yang\) embodied in the Tao, which are fundamental substances of which myriad things are constructed. The three is their blending with the primordial \(ki\), which refers to the harmonious state formed by the interaction between \(yin\) and \(yang\).\(^\text{26}\) Here, Ellen Chen also offers a helpful understanding of \(ch\'ung-ch'i\). She identifies \(yin\) with the heavy \(ki\)


\(^{26}\) Chan, *The Way of Lao-Tzu*, p. 42.
which eventually solidifies to become the earth, while *yang* is the light *ki* ascending to become heaven. This *yin* and *yang* as representing earth and heaven are dynamic breaths, *ch'ung-ch'i*, blending harmoniously to become all existence. In this sense, one, two, three, as cosmogonic principles are not differentiated from the original *ki* in terms of substance, but variously specialized forms of *ki*, which represent the forward going stages of creative evolution. As we have seen, *ki* of Lao tzu has both microcosmic and macrocosmic aspects, which consistently move from Tao to human beings to myriad things through the union of *yin* and *yang*. Here, one can foretaste the “one and many” identity of *ki* in which *ki* is presented as a material-spiritual reality, subtle but basic to everything. This perspective appears also in Chuang tzu and is fully developed later in the thought of Chang Tsai in neo-Confucianism.

27 Chen, p. 159.

28 Tu Wei-ming criticizes the view which presents *ki* only as matter. He points out that this attempt has been made in contemporary China based on the ideology of materialism in which two philosophers, Chang Tsai and Wang Fu-chih, are misrepresented as paradigmatic examples. Although he recognizes the materialist points of those thinkers, *ki* is not merely matter but vital force constitutive of all pervasive spirituality; *ki* in the tradition of Chinese philosophy is a way of conceptualizing the basic structure and function of the cosmos. Despite the availability of symbolic resources to make an analytical distinction between spirit and matter, it signifies a conscious refusal to abandon a mode of thought that synthesizes spirit and matter as an undifferentiated whole. Following Tu's cautious distinction, the word "material" in this paper is not based on the assumption that *ki* is merely materialistic. See Tu Wei-ming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Vision of Nature," in *On Nature* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), edited by Leroy S. Rouner, pp. 115-116.
Chuang Tzu

Chuang tzu (399-295 BCE) depicts *ki* as "wandering air," which is present everywhere by saying: "There is the wandering air; there are the motes; there are living things that blow one against another with their breath." He expresses the spontaneous character of *ki* in relation to *ki* of nature; for instance, *ki* of Heaven, *ki* of Earth, Six *ki* (or energies)—*yin*, *yang*, wind, rain, dark, and light, and so on. Since demonstrating all the examples of Chuang tzu’s *ki* would exceed the limit of my study here, it is proper to focus on Chuang tzu’s *ki*-monistic perspective demonstrated in relation to the issue of life and death. According to him, life and death is a natural phenomenon resulting in the movement of condensation and dispersion of *ch’i*, since all things in the world come from one, that is, *ki*. Chuang tzu states,

> Life is the companion of death, death is the beginning of life. Who understands their working? Man’s [Woman’s] life is a coming together of *ch’i*. If it comes together, there is life; if scatters, there is death. And if life and death are companions to each other, then what is there for us to be anxious about?.... The ten thousand things are really one.

There is a story in which the idea of the oneness of life and death is well shown in relation to the death of Chuang tzu’s wife. When Chuang tzu’s wife died, his friend, Hui tzu, came by to offer his condolence. Hui tzu was startled when he found that Chuang


30 Tosiyagi, *What is Ki?* p. 22.

tzu was celebrating her death at the funeral with singing and dancing. Hui tzu criticizes Chung tzu's misbehavior by saying,

Someone has lived with you, raised children for you and she has aged and died. Is it right that you should not shed any tear? But now you are singing and beating the bowl. Is this not too much?\(^3^2\)

Chuang tzu responds to him with his famous answer:

When she died, how could I help being affected? But as I think the matter over, I realize that originally she had no life; and not only no life, she had no form; not only no form, she had no \(ch'i\). In the limbo of existence and non-existence, there was transformation and the \(ch'i\) was evolved. The \(ch'i\) was transformed to be formed, form was transformed to become life, and now birth has transformed to become death. This is like the rotation of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, and winter. Now she lies asleep in the great house (the universe). For me to go about weeping and wailing would be to show my ignorance of destiny. Therefore I desist.\(^3^3\)

For Chuang tzu, life and death are one, like different sides of the same coin. This thought only becomes possible based on the idea of \(ki\)-monism that everything in the universe is activated by \(ki\), conceived as a fluid which vitalizes or diminishes all existences. As such, in Chuang tzu as well as Lao tzu, \(ki\) is perpetually ceaseless, permeates Tao, and constantly works by the \(yin\) and \(yang\) principle in the emergence of new forms.

B. The Religious Taoist \(Ki\)

Besides the philosophical aspect of \(ki\), \(ki\) in religious Taoism carries more practical characteristics which have been regarded as a guide to specific activities, such

\(^{32}\) Ibid., pp. 191-192.
as personal conduct, acupuncture, and swordsmanship through various techniques. These developments were known as *ch’igong* (기공/氣功), which are techniques for absorbing and keeping *ki* within the human body. Taoist adepts created various forms of *ki* exercises in relation to human health and longevity. The focus of those activities is not on the mere mastery of techniques but on achieving the inner strength of the *ki* in order to unite with the Tao. The notion of union with the Tao is the core idea of religious Taoism in which the body cannot be separated from the spirit lest one exclude the other in the process of achieving union. In this part I shall discuss the concept of *ki* in relation to the doctrine of the three life-principles, *ch’i* (breath), *ching* (vital essence/정/精), and *shen* (spirit/신/神), in the religious Taoist tradition. Each of them has two dimensions: being present in the human being as microcosm and in the cosmos as macrocosm. For their proper cultivation, certain techniques are created in relation to breath circulation, and sexual hygiene with a blending of internal alchemy, namely, *neidan* (내단/內丹).*34* *Neidan* is, in short, a method of finding illumination by returning to the fundamental order of the universe. This is closely related to the idea of the regeneration of the individual, since both individual and cosmos are connected from beginning to end. In

33 Ibid.

other words, the whole purpose of *neidan* is to unite with the Tao and pursues the oneness of the body and the spirit.

1-3. The Confucian *Ki*

Although the major development of *ki* in Confucian tradition did not fully appear until the *Sung* dynasty (960-1279 CE), social and ethical *ki* was once introduced during the period of Warring States (403-221 BCE) along with the Taoist understanding of *ki*. As the *Chou* dynasty began (1100-200 BCE), the faith in *Sangje* turned to the worship of “Heaven,” which originally had personal characteristics, but then gradually became less anthropomorphic in meaning. Heaven was portrayed as the cosmic and moral order that possesses intelligence and the will to direct the fate of all human beings. The political background of Heaven worship was closely related to the corruption of the Kingship of the *Chou* dynasty. The dynasty declined and became vulnerable due to the subsequent defeat in the struggle for political hegemony with the federal princes. People began to dishonor Heaven and eventually came to distrust the divine rights of the King, given from Heaven. As the political situation became unstable through the period of Warring States, various intellectual groups emerged to reform the world. These movements advocated denial of the anthropomorphic transcendent being, and further emphasized the search for immanent spirits residing within human beings. Accordingly, the dominant feature of the idea of *ki* became more complex and stressed not only its ethical aspect but also cosmological dimensions.

35 Ching and Kün, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, p. 100.
According to the *Analects*, Confucius mentioned four kinds of *ki*, which were all related to the ethical behavior of human beings. The four kinds of *ki* were *chapgii* (*ki* of speaking manner/잡기/雜氣), *siggi* (*ki* of having food/식기/食氣), and *heulgi* (*ki* of one's temper/혈기/血氣). He emphasized the practical dimension of *ki* and the importance of controlling one's *ki* in order to be an ideal person in society.

Mencius proposed the notion of *hao jan chih ch’i* (浩然之氣), which means "immensely great and strong *ki.*" It is the *ki*, as Fung explains, which is achieved by the combination of righteousness with the Tao. Mencius contended that *hao jan chih ch’i* arises from anyone who cultivates the understanding of the Tao and a long accumulation of righteousness. As such, the concept of *ki* in this case stresses its social and ethical aspects. This social aspect of the idea of *ki* was philosophically systematized in the time of the Sung dynasty (960-1279 CE). The rise of Neo-Confucianism was the dominant feature in this period. The major philosophical issue was the examination of the relation between *li* as the cosmic principle and *ki* as the material force.

Neo-Confucianism began with the philosophy of Chou Tun-i, who summarized his major idea in the "Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate," namely, *T’ai-chi Tu* (太極圖). With the Diagram, he interpreted the notion of *ki* in relation to the "Five Elements"—water, fire, wood, metal, and earth—and the one Supreme Ultimate (*T’ai Chi*). For Chou, the Five Elements are produced by the activity of *yin* and *yang*, which constitutes the one Supreme Ultimate, which in turn is fundamentally the Ultimate

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of non-being. In Chou's thinking, the idea of "one is many and many is one" is fashioned in explaining the Ultimate reality called T'ai Chi, which is one and yet many. This idea of Chou is taken over by Chang Tsai who strongly advocates a ki-monistic or non-dualistic worldview.

According to Chang Tsai, the ki as a vital force is the fundamental substance by which all processes of the universe can be explained. His philosophical system starts with the concept of ki, which is divided into the two embodiments, yin and yang. He believes that ki existed in the beginning of the universe and everything in the world is made of ch'i. This implies that ki is "co-ordinated with Tao," and Tao appears as the "highest product of ch'i." As Carsun Chang points out, Chang Tsai seems to believe that ki and Tao are identical because of the latter's acceptance of common characters for ki and Tao. This is a distinctive feature of Chang Tsai's understanding of ki. Chang Tsai's perception of ki was subsequently criticized and modified by the Ch'eng brothers—Ch'eng Yi and Ch'eng Hao—through their introduction of the concept of li (principle), which was later fully developed and systematized by Chu Hsi. The li as the


38 Chang says, "that the Great Ethereal cannot exist without ch'i...That the Great Ethereal is shapeless is the essence of ch'i. Its consolidation or dissolution is the manifestness of ch'i...The ch'i fills the Great Ethereal. ch'i, which sometimes goes up or at other times comes down, is the seed of fullness or emptiness, or the beginning of motion or rest. What goes up is the light, yang part; what comes down is the heavy, yin part. It can consolidate or dissolve in the forms of wind and rain, snow and frost, mountains and rivers, and myriad other things." Chang Tsai, Collected Works, Book 12, quoted by Carsun Chang, The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought (Bookman Associates: New York, 1957), pp. 171-172.

39 Chang, The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought, p. 176.

40 Ibid.
supreme principle leads or moves \( ki \) in a certain direction. Although \( li \) and \( ki \) are not clearly separated, some distinction between them exists in Chu Hsi's philosophical system. His particular brand of Neo-Confucianism, referred to as rationalism, remained the major orthodoxy in the history of Chinese philosophy. With the emergence of the notion of \( li \), the anthropomorphic image of the Supreme Being gradually faded away.\(^4\)

The argument about \( li \) and \( ki \) became an important motivation of flourishing academic debate in Korea. The idea of \( ki \) was further developed through Korean neo-Confucian scholars such as Suh Kyung-duck (1489-1546), Yi Yul-gok (1536-1584), and Choe Han-ki (1803-1877).

\(^4\) During the nineteenth century, the \( Ch'ing \) dynasty rapidly declined due to the twin forces of internal corruption and growing political and economic pressure from the Western world. After the defeat of the Opium War, scholars were shocked and overwhelmed by the strong Western military power and modern science. The Western impact brought about the first major break with Neo-Confucianism. Scholars attempted to absorb modern scientific notions such as light and electricity in interpreting the concept of \( ki \). In the beginning of the twentieth century, some scholars studied \( ki \) in comparison with the "atom" or "particle," and tended to interpret it in a materialist way. As we have seen, the philosophy of \( ki \) has been constantly developed for three thousand years from the \( Shang \) dynasty up to the present time. Each dynasty produced a unique concept of \( ki \) closely related to the particular historical context. This demonstrates again that no philosophical notion can be created in a vacuum; ideas gradually evolve going through cycles of birth, development, and decline in human history.
2. The Korean Supreme Being: Hanûnim Faith

It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that the worship of “Heaven” can be viewed as an almost universal primordial human faith found almost everywhere in primal religions. Since the life of ancient people was closely related to natural phenomena, “Heaven,” (or Sky) which, for them, held an enormous power to control the weather and all natural disasters, was an object of worship with full reverence and fear. Further study of the concept of Heaven and Hanûnim faith will be presented later with the notion of Ch’önju (천주/天主) in relation to the panentheism of Tonghak thought. The study of Heaven and Hanûnim faith in this part is meant merely to open the discussion of the religio-cultural background of the Ultimate Ki of Tonghak.

Similar to the worship of Sangje in China, Korea has maintained the Hanûnim faith. Traditionally, Hanûnim has been worshipped as the supreme “God” who controls other less powerful deities. Although historical and archeological evidence of the Hanûnim faith are not fully adequate, I shall refer to the most reliable Chinese sources, which support the idea that this was the original indigenous belief of the Korean religious traditions. The Korean term Hanûl (하늘)\(^{42}\) indicates “Heaven,” and nim (님) is an honorific expression particularly used to address a personal being in Korean. Hanûnim is, thus, a term expressing the highest possible veneration of Heaven. The evidence of

\(^{42}\) The reason that the mode of the term Hanûnim is changed to Hanûl rather than Hanû when it is used as an independent form is because of the “rule of the consonant” in the Korean linguistic system. According to the rule, for example, riöl (널), consonant, automatically drops as it confronts the same one within one word.
Hanunim faith traces back to the Tangun (단군/단군) myth, the founding myth of Korea.

The Hanunim faith, or the worship of Heaven, is deeply rooted in Shamanism, which is generally viewed as an almost universal form of primal or primordial religion throughout the world. Thus, in order to understand Hanunim faith, it is important to look at the Shamanist understanding of the Ultimate reality. The dominant feature of Shamanistic theism is closely related to animism or pre-animism. Animism is known as a religious phenomenon which occurred in the primitive stage of human evolution characterized by a belief in a multiplicity of spirits. This belief arose when primitive human beings attempted to explain diverse natural phenomena such as wind, rain, storm, earthquake and so on, which made them feel vulnerable. Since they were not able to

43 The Wei Shu (The Historical book of Wei/위서/偉書) tells us that two thousand years ago, at the time of Emperor Tao, Tangun Wanggôm chose Asadal as his capital and founded the state of Chosön. The Old Record (Kogi) notes that in olden times Hwanin’s son, Hwanung, wished to descend from Heaven and live in the world of human beings. Knowing his son’s desire, Hwanin surveyed the three highest mountains and found Mount Taebaek the most suitable place for his son to settle and help human beings. Therefore, he gave Hwangung descended with three thousand followers to a spot under a tree by the Holy Altar atop Mount Taebaek, and he called this place the City of God. He was the Heavenly King Hwanung. Leading the Earl of Wind, the Master of Rain, and the Master of Clouds, he took charge of some three hundred and sixty areas of responsibility, including agriculture, allotted lifespans, illness, punishment, and good and evil, and brought culture to his people. At that time a bear and a tiger living in the same cave prayed to Holy Hwanung to transform them into human beings. The king gave them a bundle of sacred mugworts and twenty cloves of garlic and said, “If you eat these and shun the sunlight for one hundred days, you will assume human form.” Both animals ate the spices and avoided the sun. After twenty-one days the bear became a woman, but the tiger, unable to observe the taboo, remained a tiger. Unable to find a husband, the bearwoman prayed under the aliar tree for a child. Hwanung metamorphosed himself, lay with her, and begot a son called Tangun Wanggôm. Quoted from Peter H. Lee and Wm. Theodore de Bary, Sources of Korean Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 5-6.

explain or understand all these natural happenings, their primitive imagination or reasoning led them to attribute similar spirits to animals, plants, and even inanimate objects. In this respect, the theism of Shamanism includes a strong feature of polytheism, which carries the notion of spirits residing in everything.

Primitive human beings believed the fullness of the spirit resided in a myriad of things, ascribed some anthropomorphic images to nature, and performed certain rituals to worship them. For instance, from ancient times, the Korean people inherited the worship of Heaven, Hanûnim faith. One of the Chinese texts is the Book of Tongijôn (동이전/東夷傳)45 which states, “in the nation of Puyô,46 people celebrate the worship of Heaven.”47 In addition, there were various forms of the worship of Heaven, namely, Tongmaeng (동맹) in the Koguryô era, Yôngo (영고/迎鼓) in the Puyô period, Muchôn (무천/舞天) in the Mahan and Ye times. During the period of such worship (October and December) people took part in the rituals in awe of Heaven, and governments even set prisoners free. Accordingly, these historical records affirm that the Hanûnim faith is the oldest indigenous faith actually practised in the people’s life. Through these religious faiths and activities, the people were comforted from the fears of natural disasters, and

45 The Tongi chapter is in the part of Wiji (위지/魏志 30 chapters), which is included in the Chronic of the Three Kingdoms (삼국지/三國志, 65 chapters) written by Chinsu (233-297) during the post-Han dynasty. The Book of Tongi is considered one of the precious resources for understanding Korean society until the mid-third century. Choe, "The Supreme Deity of Our [Korean] People [우리민족의 지고신]," in The Thesis of the Centennial Celebration of Tonghak Revolution [동학혁명 백주년 기념논총] Vol. I (Seoul, Korea: Ch’ôndogyo Chungang Ch’ôngbu, 1991), edited by the Committee of the Centennial Celebration of Tonghak Revolution, p. 41.

46 Puyô is one of the ancient states in Korea. Ibid.

47 Ibid.
asked blessing and welfare for their lives. These Shamanistic religious phenomena are commonly observed in the primitive stage of human religious history, and Korea is no exception.  

The amalgamation of the Haninim faith with Shamanism is also reflected in the Korean Tangun myth. The Shamanistic elements in the myth, for example, multiple spirits associated with natural phenomena (wind, rain, and cloud) are described in close relation to human affairs such as grain, fate, sickness, blessing and so on. Also, the myth includes the notion of the sacred tree and mountain (Tangun later becomes the immortal mountain). Here, we need to discuss two ideas related to the theism of Shamanism. One is the notion of mansin (만신/萬神), and the other is a monotheism. Mansin literally means “thousands of gods,” which indicates the polytheistic aspect of Shamanism. In Korean Shamanism, more than two hundred and twenty three gods exist that can be generally categorized into two groups. One group is natural gods, consisting of the god of heaven, of earth, and of mountain; the other group is human gods consisting of kings, of generals, and of feudal princes, some of whom died at a young age or because of

48 It will not be necessary to deal with the origin of Korean Shamanism in a separate manner here because Shamanism is a common religious phenomenon spreading throughout all parts of the world. However, the distinctive ritual, kui, of Korean Shamanism originated in the late 8th century during the Silla Kingdom. The worship of Heaven with dancing and singing was a Shamanistic ritual which continued to be practiced in Korea until the 5th century, and later changed its characteristics by synthesizing with the elements of Buddhism. See Ryu Dong-sik, The History and Structure of Korean Shamanism [한국무속의 역사와 구조] (Seoul, Korea: Yônse University, 1986), p. 61.

misfortune or for unjust reasons.\textsuperscript{50} These human gods are normally perceived as objects of fear who can bring a malevolent end to people's lives, because they are han-ridden people (having severe resentment) due to the unnatural causes of their deaths.

The trace of monotheism has to do with the idea of the god of Heaven, the Supreme Being. The notion of the highest deity or Sky god is often raised as a thorny issue in the discussion of Shamanism because of its ambiguity. Although Shamanism carries a strong sense of polytheism, there is also a concept of a supreme "God," which is called since remote antiquity "Hanunim" in Korean. Hanunim in Shamanism is perceived as the spirit of Heaven, who is the controller of all things, heaven and earth. One might describe the Hanunim faith as a similar concept to the monotheistic idea of God in Christianity.\textsuperscript{51} Although the Hanunim faith includes a monotheistic aspect, it is difficult, however, to identify it automatically with the monotheism of Christianity. One of the notable aspects of Korean Shamanism is that there is no concept of a creator. In Korean Shamanism, God or gods and human beings appear almost simultaneously, and even after the completion of the universe. This is a peculiar characteristic of Korean Shamanism, distinguishing it from that of North Asia (Siberia).\textsuperscript{52} For instance, one of the Shamanistic myths, which could be seen as a creation myth, begins with heaven and earth already existing—"...as heaven and earth are formulated, which were yet not separated. At this time, Maitreya (the future Buddha) was born. Since there was nothing to wear,


\textsuperscript{52} Lee Pil-young, \textit{The Comparative Study of North Asian and Korean Shamanism}
s/he wore plants and ate raw food. Later s/he had come to know the use of fire and water…"53 In this myth, no explanation is provided about how nature is formulated; rather it is a brief affirmation of the existence of nature from the beginning of the world. Although there is a Supreme Being in Korean Shamanism, s/he is not a creator but the highest deity who controls other lesser deities, which are more closely related to earthly life.

The Heaven-God who is remote yet maintains the status of the highest deity, reflects the unique religious perception of Korean people who develop an immediate and practical perspective on God. Consequently, people gradually placed the transcendent god of Heaven with concrete objects such as trees, mountains (e.g. Tangun), and additionally created multiple gods of the household, for example, god of the door, of the room, of the kitchen, of the washroom, and other countless deities—which are more closely related to daily human life. In this respect, one can claim that the worship of tree, mountain, or other household deities in Shamanism stems from the Hanunim faith, that is, the unique form of a culturally specific monotheism, which carries also polytheistic characteristics.

3. The Ultimate Ki in Tonghak Tradition

_Tonghak_ is a Korean indigenous religion developed by incorporating traditional Korean religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, and Taoism. _Tonghak_
was founded by Choe Je-u (1824-1864 CE) whose honorific name is “Suun” (which means “water-cloud” 수운/水雲), in 1860, in an effort to find a way of salvation for the people, minjung, who were suffering under socio-political oppression in Korea during the late Chosôn Dynasty (1394-1910 CE). In the nineteenth century, Korea was faced with multiple crises, through the internal corruption of political leaders, the exploitation of a ruling group and the spread of infectious diseases, as well as external threats and attacks from foreign nations. At that time, the political leaders of the Chosôn Dynasty, who followed the Confucian ideology, severely oppressed and exploited the people in order to maintain the nation’s centuries-old feudalism. At the same time, Korea, along with other East Asian countries, was being threatened by the influx of Western capitalism.

At the end of the Chosôn Dynasty, the Korean people, learning about the humiliating defeat of China by Western nations, had good reason to be afraid of Western expansion. The Korean people, therefore, realized that the most urgent task was to protect themselves from Western aggression. In this historical context, Suun named the religion Tonghak (it became Ch’ŏndogyo/천도교/天道教), which means Eastern Learning, in contrast to Western Roman Catholicism. For that reason, Tonghak thought contains some anti-Western elements. First, because of the political situations mentioned above, a strong antagonism existed against the infiltration of Western imperialism. Second, at the prospect of the demolition of their nation, the Korean people became more nationalistic and sought ways to protect the purity of their traditional religions and cultures from the heterogeneous, capitalistic Western civilization. Thus, they felt a need to equip themselves with a strong moral defense whenever they engaged in disputes with westerners. Subsequently, these anti-Western sentiments brought about a number of
disputes between Western trade-boats and the people in local villages. Some examples which created a crisis among the Korean people are the invasion of Pyŏngyang (1866) by the American steamship General Sherman, French Admiral Roze's attack on Kanghwa Port (1866), the smuggling activities of E. Oppert, (a Northern Prussian merchant, to rob the grave of the King's grandfather), and American Admiral John Rodgers' attack on Kanghwa Port (1871). Consequently, the people began to look for a new religion for spiritual support. In this emotional situation, the Tonghak religion emerged.  

As mentioned earlier, the distinctive characteristics of the Ultimate Ki in the Tonghak tradition can be described as the syncretic combination of the pantheistic feature of Shamanist, Religious Taoist, and Neo-Confucian traditions and of the Korean indigenous Hanûnim faith, which contained monotheistic elements. This syncretic aspect of the Ultimate Ki of Tonghak was produced from a particular social context of late nineteenth century Korea. This unique development of the Ultimate Ki carries attributes of a personal anthropomorphic Hanûnim, presented together with the perception of ki, which took its distinctive nature from a diverse but separate tradition. For example, the Ultimate in Tonghak, Hanûnim, which also denotes the Ultimate Ki, is described by various names such as Hanûnim from the indigenous Korean faith, Sangje from the Confucian tradition, and kwisin (ghost-spirits/귀신/鬼神) from the Shamanist/Religious Taoist traditions. Suun, the founder of Tonghak, takes the liberty of calling and perceiving the Ultimate as Hanûnim in his belief system. As he attempted to emphasize a personal aspect of Hanûnim the monotheistic name of "God" or Sangje emerged, though

54 For further discussion on the political background of Tonghak, see Shin Il-chul, Tonghak and Kapo Farmer's Revolution [동학과 갑오농민전쟁] (Seoul, Korea: P’yongmin So Dang, 1990), pp. 266-290.
he also employed a term characteristic of pantheistic modes of *ki* like *kwisin* to enhance the eminent character of God. Owing to this ambiguous and unsystematic feature of the Ultimate *Ki* espoused by Suun, some inconsistent patterns of his thought are observed. The difficult issue of the relation between *Hanunim* and the Ultimate *Ki* is still being discussed among *Tonghak* scholars in Korea.

In order to understand the philosophy of the Ultimate *Ki*, it is important, first of all, to look at the particular historical context in which the *Tonghak* was established. I shall then provide a general description of the Ultimate *Ki* based on the major doctrines of *Tonghak*. Further examination of the concept will then be undertaken in relation to the panentheistic perception of “God” as the Ultimate *Ki*, utilizing the terms “transcendence” and “immanence.”

3-1. The Philosophy of the Ultimate *Ki* (*Chigi*)

The Ultimate *Ki* consists of two words; *chi* means ultimate or supreme, and *ki* means breath or wind, or energy which we have examined above in Shamanist, Religious Taoist and Neo-Confucian traditions. The Ultimate *Ki* means the “supreme breath or energy” which can be depicted as the eminent and natural power or life in the universe, and is that through which all things came into existence. Suun defines the Ultimate *Ki* “*Honwon ji Ilgi* (혼원질일기/混元之一氣),” which means the “one *Ki* of the

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55 For the discussion of how Suun’s panentheism is developed by later leaders—Haewol (second leader) and Uiam (third leader) exploring the ideas of *Yang Ch’ŏnju* (nurturing Heaven/양천/養天) and *Che Ch’ŏn* (union with Heaven/체천/體天) or *In Nae Ch’ŏn* (humanity is Heaven/인내천/人乃天).

56 Choe Suun, *Tongkyŏng Taejŏn* (東經大典), chapter on *Nonhagmun [Writing on*
primordial chaos.” Here, homwon indicates the chaotic or undifferentiated state of the Ultimate Ki of heaven and earth, which constitutes the myriad creatures, and Ilgi means oneness or the totality of the Ultimate Ki. The Ultimate Ki as the basic and primordial life participates in all the affairs of the universe and exists spontaneously without a beginning or an end in its true essence.

The Ultimate Ki not only designates the origin of all forms of life of the universe, but embraces the union of spirit and matter in the life in the universe. The Ultimate Ki is the totality in which spirit and matter are interrelated as part of the universal harmony (조화/道化). In this respect, the Ultimate Ki of Tonghak represents a term for the manifestation of God, Hanunim. In other words, the nature of human relationship with God is not dualistic, because the Ultimate Ki is the totality of existence.

The Ultimate Ki is perceived as the supreme breath of life. The Ultimate Ki is the ultimate cause of the complexity of the present, that is, the evolutionary force through which all things are manifested. The great life of the Ultimate Ki, the life of Hanunim, is profoundly mystical and transcendent without a beginning or an end. The Ultimate Ki gradually develops through its own power and will until it has reached the highest stage of evolution in humans. Humanity is the place where divine nature can be most fully

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found. Human beings are the fullest form of the evolutionary process of the Ultimate Ki. Since the Ultimate Ki is eternal, it continues to develop through future generations as it achieves a perfect humanity and harmony. There is some affinity between the evolutionary process of the Ultimate Ki and scientific evolutionism in that “all living things evolved from lower forms to higher forms of life resulting in millions of different life forms in the universe.”60 However, according to Tonghak thought, the evolution of nature is dependent on the movement of the Ultimate Ki. The world is also the self-spontaneous manifestation of the Ultimate Ki. Suun’s explanation of the Ultimate Ki is as follows:

The Ultimate Ki being here and now,  
I yearn for its great descent.  
Waiting on Hanunim (God), I have naturally become.  
Eternally not forgetting, I become aware of all.61

The Ultimate Ki is both from within and from without, it is pervasive in the universe, in all the myriad of creatures. Consequently, the Ultimate Ki becomes a term equivalent to Suun’s perception of Hanunim or Sangje, and denotes the evolutionary manifestation of itself within the phenomena of the world. The Ultimate Ki is the origin, principle and power, which comes from the total and original entity from which all things have come into being. In other words, the Ultimate Ki may be translated as “God” in terms of being total and original.

Choe Bong-ik, a scholar of Tonghak, contends that the Ultimate Ki is “a root of the world and mother and life of the Universe. All things in the world come from the


61 Choe Suun, Tonggyông Taeジョン, chapter on Chumun [Incantation/주문/呪文].
Ultimate Ki and go back to it.\textsuperscript{62} The Ultimate Ki is not only the ultimate energy of the universe, but also the primordial life of the phenomenal world. In other words, the Ultimate Ki as life moves and forms all phenomena in the world. The major characteristic of the Ultimate Ki even includes attributes of Hanünim, which can be perceived as a religious expression of the Ultimate Ki in Tonghak thought.

What makes then the Ultimate Ki occur? How does the Ultimate Ki work or operate in the world? For the discussion of the causality of the Ultimate Ki, two paradoxical notions: Puryôn Kiyón (불연기연/不然其然) and Muwi lhwa (무위이화/無為以化)\textsuperscript{63} need to be introduced. In the presentation of these two concepts, we need to keep in mind that, on the one hand, these concepts are called paradoxical, because they are difficult to place with any precision within the traditional Western philosophical framework, which has no corresponding ideas or areas of thought. One the other hand, these two concepts are apparently being used as attributes of the metaphysical “way” in the concept of the Ultimate Ki and would therefore seem to be understood as both ontological and cosmological ideas. Neither of them belongs exclusively to any single domain. This is a basic difficulty encountered when the framework of Western philosophy or theology is used as a tool to present ambiguous characteristics of Korean philosophy. These kinds of fundamental dilemmas take place particularly often in the process of dealing with paradoxical concepts in the dialogue.

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\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
First, the literal meaning of *Puryøn Kiyøn* is that “it is a suchness and not a suchness” or “it is like that because it is thus and not thus.” In other words, “there are beings or things that are as they are,” which is a kind of principle for not naming and reasoning. Suun says, “since remote antiquity, all myriad creatures are found each in their own way.” It is true to say that he refuses to speculate on the nature of causality by saying, “although the way things are shown may inform us of their being such and such, as far as their origin is concerned, it is difficult to say one way or another.” For him, the problem of causality is simply mysterious and unknowable.

In contrast to the primary cause of Western classical thinking, the Ultimate *Ki* is not a determinate cause of beings. The world is produced without a preliminary plan or intention. The existence of the pure divine realm, which is consistently found in Christian tradition, is absent in this idea of suchness. Accordingly, the ontological and epistemological question: why God felt the necessity of creating the world, with which Christianity has struggled, is simply not raised. According to the notion of *Puryøn Kiyøn*, the Ultimate *Ki* is causeless and beginningless, operating in a spontaneous movement of cosmic energy, referring to the state in which things and beings unfold and develop or process of their own accord.

Secondly, the cosmic existence of the Ultimate *Ki* emerges with the principle of *Muwi Ihwa* (무위이화/無為以化) which commonly means “working through non-action” or “letting things develop by themselves.” This does not indicate “quietism” in a passive manner, but designates a paradoxical way of actualizing or realizing the

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64 Choe Suun, *Tongkyøng Taejøn*, chapter on *Pulyøn Kiyøn* [不然基然/ 불연기연]
65 Ibid.
spontaneous movement of the Ultimate Ki. The concept of Muwi Ihwa, which can be said to be "an expression for the Ultimate," in fact, has little to do with "total inaction" or "doing nothing," but intimates the workings of the Ultimate reality. The nature of this concept is, in this sense, "unpremeditated, nondeliberative, noncalculating, nonpurposive action."66 This spontaneity or the way of being of the Ultimate Ki is a prime characteristic and is considered another way of expressing the normative ideal for how things and beings are to exist and progress. Philosophically speaking, Muwi Ihwa, the way of spontaneity, is used to describe the ineffable phenomena of nature and to convey that nothing further can be explained. This spontaneous cosmic order offers an ontological basis of self-manifestation of the Ultimate Ki in the process of harmony (조화/道化). In accordance with this principle, Hamınim in the work of the Ultimate Ki is portrayed as Kihwa Chisin (기화지신/氣化之神) or Kihwa Sinrong (기화신령/氣化神靈)67 who is the movement of constant change and transformation. In the philosophy of the Ultimate Ki, no clear distinction has been made between the concept of Hamınim and the Ultimate Ki. In fact, it is quite interchangeable. Hamınim exists with a continued interaction of the Ultimate Ki in which all forms of the myriad of creatures are germinated and generated.

Reflecting on this philosophical discourse of the Ultimate Ki, it can be seen that the idea of the Ultimate Ki is deeply rooted in the articulated discussion of li-ki theory in Neo-Confucianism. What is then the major religious feature of the Ultimate Ki? According to Ryu, the philosophical source of Suun's concept of the Ultimate Ki seems

to be Neo-Confucian cosmology. During the 1860s, toward the end of Suun's life, Chu Hsi's books were the most popular among the educated class. Also, Suun's father, a Confucian scholar who had great interests and depth of knowledge in the Confucian classics and Neo-Confucian cosmology, was significantly influential. Considering these factors, Suun's philosophical foundation seems to be primarily Confucianism, particularly Neo-Confucianism.68

However, Suun's understanding of the Ultimate Ki is not merely associated with Neo-Confucianism; rather it is an expansion of the empirical religious dimension of religious Taoism. For example, although the Ultimate Ki of Suun is in part based on the theory of Taegük of Chou Ton-i, Suun applied the theory to his religious system by replacing the metaphysical Great Ultimate, Taegük, into Ch’ónju, as personal Hanünim whose spirit descends upon human beings through religious experience. Suun describes this as Shi Ch’ónju (waiting on Heaven), which cannot be automatically given by human nature, but is achieved by sincere cultivation of one's mind and purifying one's ki (Susimjonggi/수심정기/修心精氣). Suun believes that through the constant cultivation of mind and ki, all human beings are able to become a Confucian ideal human being (Kunja/군자/君子) or Shamanist/religious Taoist immortal (or mountain god), that is, divine human beings. In this respect, although Suun employs Confucian terminologies derived from his philosophical background, the nature of the Ultimate Ki is also closely associated with the mystical aspect of Shamanist/religious Taoist ki. The Taoist feature of ki is further observed in his description of a theophanic experience as follows.


In April, my heart had a sudden chill feeling and my body was strangely shaking. Even though I thought it must be a sickness, I could find no symptoms and could not express my state of mind. Just then there was a Sôñô (mysterious words of Taoism/선어/仙語) heard from Heaven, and I was greatly amazed; 'fear not, be not troubled. I am One who is called Sangje by the people of the world. Do you not know me?' Inquiring of him further, Sangje replied, 'I humbly send you into the world to teach this Way. Be not doubtful, have no doubt at all.' Then I asked, 'shall I teach this the Western Way?' Sangje replied, 'not so, I have a spiritual mark which is called Sônyak (mysterious medicine/선약/仙藥) and its form is like Taegûk (the ultimate reality of the universe, the symbol of the universe in Chinese philosophy/태극/太極) and also like the Kunggung (an ambivalent, curved, bow-like figure/궁궁/弓弓).’ Sangje ordered to Suun, ‘receive this mark and deliver the people from their diseases. Take my mark and teach people. If you do these things for me you will enjoy long life and your virtue will spread through the earth.’

This mystical experience which was accompanied with sudden physical change is close to Shamanist/religious Taoist traditions. In particular, Taoist characteristics are distinctively observed in his experience through expressions such as Sônô, Sônyak, and Kunggung. Accordingly, Suun’s Ultimate Ki cannot be categorized merely within the scope of materialistic interpretation dominant in Neo-Confucianism of that time, but rather needs to be extended to the Shamanist/religious Taoist understanding of ki, which is particularly combined with the Hanûnim faith. This aspect of the Ultimate Ki is also well expressed in the main doctrine of Tonghak religion, Shi Ch’ônju.

The Korean term *Shi* ("bearing" or "waiting on") can be interpreted in relation to the Shamanist idea of waiting on the spirit of the body which assists a shaman to receive diverse spirits. In Shamanism, at the moment of becoming a shaman or of the ecstasy during the *kut* (shamanistic ritual), the shaman has mystical experiences in which she is able to make contact with the spirits. This can be described both as "waiting on spirits" from the side of the shaman (human world) and as "descending spirits" from the side of the gods. A similar feature is found in the religious experience of Suun, which is viewed as a moment of encountering *Hanûnim* as explained above.

Although Suun borrowed Neo-Confucian terminologies to express his own religious experience and thought, Neo-Confucianism is not the major religious source of Suun's thought and the teaching of *Shi Ch'ôngju*. Rather, an equal emphasis needs to be given to Shamanism and Taoism, in particular, religious Taoism, for an understanding of Suun's religious synthesis. 70 Through his mystical experience, Suun believed that just as a shaman experiences the spirits descending from the gods, human beings are also able to wait on (*Shi*) the Ultimate *Ki* of *Hanûnim* in their bodies. Although the way Suun experienced *Hanûnim* can be understood in terms of Shamanistic and Taoist tradition, his notion of *Shi* holds some distinctive characteristics. For example, whereas in Shamanism, shamans are able to possess the spirits of gods alone for a particular period of time, Suun presents the universal implication of *Shi*, i.e., that anyone who wants to wait on the Ultimate *Ki* of *Hanûnim* through spiritual-physical cultivation can find union with the Ultimate reality in the presence of the Ultimate *Ki*. 71 How then does then Suun

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70 Ryu, *Tonghak and Ch'ôngdogyo*, pp. 520-528.

71 Ryu, Ibid., pp. 22-23.
interpret the idea of Shi? For a deeper understanding of the Ultimate Ki, it is essential to relate the concept to one of the main tenets of Tonghak, namely, Shi Ch’‘onju.

3-2 The Ultimate Ki and the Concept of Shi (Waiting on)

The term Shi became integrated into the 21 (Chinese) characters of the “magic words” which Suun received from Hanunim during this mysterious experience, which, for him, was a moment of enlightenment. These magic words can be divided into two parts; the first consists of eight characters and the second consists of thirteen. The first part can be explained as follows:

*Chi (芝加哥): to reach the ultimate reality through earnestness and respect

*Ki (芝加哥): the great cosmic spirit of the entire Universe

*Kumji (芝加哥今至): to embody Hanunim with the Great Spirit, Chiki, through realizing the ultimate reality (Tao)

*Wonwui (芝加哥願為): to wish to accomplish the needs of people by praying to Hanunim

*Taegang (芝加哥大降): to wish to achieve one’s purpose by embodying the Great Spirit, the Ultimate ki, by respecting Hanunim and doing virtuous deeds.

In this prayer, Suun chants to invoke the Ultimate Ki upon him, a practice which traditionally comes from religious Taoism, synthesized with shamanist elements in Korea. The distinctive aspect of religious Taoist ki has to do with the understanding of ki as identified with thousands of gods residing within human bodies, which need a constant physical and spiritual cultivation for keeping in touch with the primordial ki of Tao.
Accordingly, it is essential to maintain \textit{ki} and the gods of the body as life-giving spirits in order to continue to connect to the original \textit{ki}. For this, some specific activities and various techniques such as Taoist meditation and yoga are considered as an important part of the process to attain the Tao. With the focusing of the mind by emptying the heart of all distractions and attachment, Taoists seek an interior and ecstatic vision which enable them to contact the primordial \textit{ki}. As explained in religious Taoist \textit{ki}, the focus of those activities is not on the mere mastery of techniques but upon achieving the inner strength of the \textit{ki} in order to unite with Tao.\footnote{Isabelle Robinet, \textit{Taoism: Growth of a Religion} (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), translated by Phyllis Brooks, pp. 105-107; Livia Kohn, \textit{Taoist Experience: An Anthology} (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1993), pp. 235-240; \textit{The Shambhala Guide to Taoism} (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), pp. 199-211.}

Similar to this practice in religious Taoism, the term \textit{Shi} of the doctrine of \textit{Shi Ch'\text{"o}nju} is closely related to the idea of the regeneration of the individual, since both individual and cosmos are connected from the beginning to the end; therefore, there is nothing but one, the Ultimate \textit{Ki}. This \textit{ki}-monistic worldview implies that the true gods are found within human beings, rather than in the idealist utopia of a distant future. The body is not the shell of the spirit but actually a dwelling place for the gods. A similar idea is found in religious Taoism: to realize the mystery of the body is to experience various bodily changes, including pregnancy and motherhood, and rebirth, in the union of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}. This idea is called "keeping the One." Kristofer Schipper explains that one may have the impression that "to keep the One" implies the "keeping" of a great many things. However, "One" in Chinese means "total" and "complete." In this sense, the notion of "keeping the One" indicates "keeping together" one's vital force. In other words, one acts in such a way that these forces remain complete and nothing is lost.
Inside the body, the One (the true self or gods) is always multiple and multiplied. In Suun’s prayer, the concept of Shi, waiting on God or the Ultimate Ki, is closely associated with the ki of religious Taoism, syncretized with Shamanism, rather than with the metaphysical ki of Neo-Confucianism.

The second part of the magic words consists of 13 characters and can be explained as follows:

*Shi* (시/侍): first of the three-character term, *Shi Ch’ónju* which means to be filled with spiritual ki within, and to feel the harmony of the spirit without

*Ch’ón* (천/天): literally, sky, or heaven, which can also mean *Hanûnim*

*Ju* (주/主): Lord who is the authority of my being and meaning

*Chohwa* (조화/造化): signifies the way things are done through *muwi*, (*wuwei*, in Chinese/무위/無為) which means non-action.

*Ch’òng* (정/定): the state of tranquility, which can be achieved by one’s union with the Ultimate Ki, i.e., by unifying one’s virtues and mind with the Ultimate Ki.

*Yŏngse* (영세/永世): literally, “long age”; signifies a human life-span

*Pulmang* (불망/不忘): being always mindful (of *Hanûnim*)

*Mansa* (만사/萬事): all the events and principles of the world

*Chi* (지/知): literally, “knowledge”; this is a particular kind of knowledge acquired through the Tao.

These 21 characters of magic words reflect the revelation of Suun and provide a context for understanding *Shi Ch’ónju*. Since *Shi* is particularly a key character in understanding

the liberation principle\textsuperscript{74} and the philosophical structure of Suun’s understanding of the Ultimate \textit{Ki}, the meaning of \textit{Shi} needs more explication. Suun defines \textit{Shi Ch’önju} as follows:

\textit{Shi} (waiting on) means that one has spirit within and energy without, which cannot be transferred to other people. \textit{Ch’önju} (Hanünim) means serving God in the same manner as honoring parents.\textsuperscript{75}

Here, \textit{Shi} includes the meaning of both being filled with the Ultimate \textit{Ki} inside and feeling the harmony of the Ultimate \textit{Ki} outside. Suun explains the meaning of \textit{Shi}, in three dimensions.

First, \textit{Shi} is “one’s having the spirit within.” According to Paek Se-myung, in its developing process, the total life of the universe has gradually become individuated and complex, having reached its most highly developed stage in the human world after passing through the plant and animal stages. In this respect, he argues that humans among all beings have the most highly developed intellectual capacity “to have the spirit within.”\textsuperscript{76}

Second, \textit{Shi} is also “one’s having energy without,” which means that humans are an individuated form of life and that the Ultimate \textit{Ki} is the totality of life. In other words,

\textsuperscript{74} Although Choe, Shi-hyung, the second founder of Tonghak, had a controversial debate on \textit{Shi} with other followers, they were unable to arrive at a clear conclusion. Until the present time, the concept of \textit{Shi} has remained ambiguous. Consequently, many scholars who study Tonghak agree that unless proof is found in another scripture, it would be difficult to perceive an exact meaning of \textit{Shi}. Thus, various interpretations of \textit{Shi} are necessary today. Lee Hyuk-bae, \textit{The Study of Tonghak Theism} [동학신관의 연구], M.A. Thesis (1988), Seoul National University, pp. 10-11.

\textsuperscript{75} Choe Suun. \textit{Tonggyōng Taejón}, chapter on Nonhagmun \textit{(Writing on Learning)}

\textsuperscript{76} Paek Se-myung, \textit{An Interpretation of Tonghak Scriptures} [동학경전해석] (Seoul: Hanguk Sasang Yŏnguhoe, 1963), p. 80.
a relationship of totality and individuality exists between the Ultimate Ki and humans respectively. In this relationship, a dualistic separation cannot be maintained. Since a human's relationship with the Ultimate Ki is like that of a part to the whole, it is necessary for humans to be dependent and to wait on the Ultimate Ki. Also, this means that, although other plants and animals possess the Ultimate Ki, human beings represent the most highly developed stage of life in the world. The human being is the image closest to the divine.77

Third, Shi indicates that "all the people of the world know and cannot be transferred," which means that when humans realize the new principle of Tao, they practice it without unnatural action or movement. Once humans are aware of the truth of Tao, they just act and live naturally and quietly in accordance with the truth. At this stage, there can be true progress based on authentic knowledge. Therefore, this phrase has the futuristic meaning of waiting on the Ultimate Ki with new knowledge and having made genuine progress.78 With this understanding of Shi, these three magic characters can be broadly defined as words for "waiting on the Ultimate Ki faithfully."79 Another

77 Son Uiam, “The Doctrine of the Transmigration of the Spirit [성령출세설/性靈出世設],” in The Great Sermons of Saint Uiam [의왕성사 법설].

78 Paek, An Interpretation of Tonghak Scriptures, pp. 81-82; Kim, Life, The Glorious Totality [생명, 그 찬란한 종체], p. 251.

79 Also, according to Suun, this carries the idea of "serving the Ultimate Ki." Then, Shi Ch’önju can be thought of being similar to Wi Ch’önju (serving the Ultimate Ki/위천주/為天主). According to Suun, the character Ju means "to serve the Ultimate Ki as a kind of filial piety." It would then seem fit to interpret Shi Ch’önju as meaning the same thing as Wi Ch’önju.
possible type of interpretation of Shi Ch'ónju is found in Yongdam Yusa (Song of Yongdam/용담유사/龍澤遺詞).  

What fortune befell you
That you desire a free ride?
Are you foolish enough
to depend on me?
Do not count on me
But trust in Hanûnim alone.
While Hanûnim is within you [literally, “your body”]
Would you still look far and away?

In this poetic scripture, Suun urges his children and relatives to wait on the Ultimate Ki which exists within them. Suun also admonishes them not to be lazy as they search for enlightenment. In this connection, what is entailed is that “all human beings are able to wait on the Ultimate Ki.” On the one hand, the Ultimate Ki is one to be served, and, on the other, the presence of the Ultimate Ki within all human beings is so pervasive that it cannot be defined completely as an objective reality, nor as an “I and Thou” relationship. More accurately, the Ultimate Ki is profoundly eminent in identifying with us. Therefore, Shi here means a holistic vision of reality and indicates a radical union between the divine and human beings, which includes the social union among human beings, the revolutionary union between individuals and society, and the ecological union between human beings and the universe.

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80 Choe, Suun, Yongdam Yusa, chapter on Kyohunga [The Song of Teaching Virtues/교훈가].


3-3. The Ultimate Ki and the Concept of Ch'ônju (God)

The dilemma in studying Suun's concept of Ch'ônju (God) is the difficulty of categorizing it in a particular theistic formula due to the syncretic religious elements found in his system. On the surface, it might seem inconsistent and unsystematic because of its emphasis on a transcendent and personal image of Ch'ônju in some cases, and a "process" perception of God in other cases. Because of his combined description of Ch'ônju, his thought might be seen as self-contradictory. However, if one looks closely at his understanding of Ch'ônju, (or the different terms to indicate the Ultimate), it functions not in a contradictory or antagonistic way but in a constructive, and possibly collaborative "paradoxical" way. This aspect will be explored in the discussion of the panentheistic nature of Ch'ônju, which becomes possible with the "transcendent immanence" and "immanent transcendence" of the Ultimate Ki.

As we have seen in his explanation of Shi Ch'ônju, Suun provides no explanation for the concept of Ch'ôn (Heaven). Considering the fact that he commented on other words, his intention seems obvious that the Ultimate Ch'ôn cannot be described. The epistemological limitation on human knowledge of Ch'ônju is noted here, which is similar to the confession of mystics whose experience of "God" or "Godhead" can never be expressed in human words. In this sense, for Suun, all the terms we employ for the discussion of the possible interpretation on Ch'ônju are nothing but tentative and partial.

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83 Ch'ônju is a Chinese word of Hanünim in Korean. Suun uses them interchangably in his philosophy; Ch'ônju was mainly used in Tonggông Taejŏn written in Chinese while Hanünim was used in Yongdam Yusa. Both of them can be translated to "God" in English.
This is quite congenial with McFague’s point of view in which all kinds of God-talk are partial descriptions of God (the backside of God), and therefore metaphorical. Keeping in mind the linguistic and epistemological limitations on the study of God as the Spirit, I shall attempt to explicate Suun’s thought on Ch’ônju.

As Suun’s religious experience demonstrates, a personal image of Ch’ônju is clearly present in his thought. According to his description of the experience, a personal encounter between Ch’ônju and Suun occurred—a moment of dialogue between them. Personal characteristics of Ch’ônju are evident in that Ch’ônju is loving and communicating, e.g: “the words that Ch’ônju (God) spoke to me” and “after listening to Ch’ônju’s words.” In his experience, Ch’ônju calls Suun by name and converses directly with him as One who cares about the plight of humanity. This Ch’ônju, Suun realized, is One who desires to liberate oppressed people and to save the corrupted world. Having presented Ch’ônju as one who communicates with human beings, it is clear that God, for Suun, is closely associated with human affairs, rather than a totally remote transcendent existent, distant from the world. Also, the Ch’ônju of Suun is not pretentious; s/he does not hide divine feelings, nor withdraw from humanity in apathy. In this respect, the Ch’ônju of Suun is an anthropomorphic “God,” with the capacity to reveal her/his will to humans.

Moreover, the personal image of God in Suun’s thought is found in the manner of addressing God. It is important to note Suun’s persistent intention of retaining the name of Ch’ônju, despite the possibility of the serious misunderstanding of the term, which

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84 Suun also calls Ch’ônju Sangje. These various names of “God” reflect the syncratic nature of Tonghak thought.
also indicates the God of Catholicism. Considering the social context of late 19th century Korea, where the persecution of Catholicism was severe, Suun's thought is sometimes viewed as highly problematic. In fact, because of the term Ch'önju, Suun and the followers of Tonghak were at times misunderstood as Catholics, and this eventually resulted in Suun's death. According to the Record on Royalty written in the regime of King Kojong (March 2nd, 1864), "...at present, a new religious sect called Tonghak accepts the teaching of Western Catholicism indiscriminately and leads people into great confusion." Why did Suun then insist on the use of such a troublesome name, Ch'önju? Was Suun's thought a religious remnant of the influence of Western Catholicism? Is Ch'önju of Tonghak then identical with the monotheistic God of Catholicism? The importance of this clarification requires the understanding of the Ultimate, or God of Tonghak, to be as precise as possible.

The relation between Tonghak and Western Catholicism on the Ultimate or God is seen differently by two groups. The major idea of the first group is that Tonghak

85 According to Lee, the word Ch'önju existed prior to the arrival of Catholicism. For example, the word Ch'önju, indicating the Lord of Heaven, was worshipped as one of the major deities of ancient Chinese ritual accompanying the other seven lesser deities such as the god of Earth, of Guard, of Yin, of Yang, of Moon, of Sun, of Four Seasons. Thus, Ch'önju is not a foreign term for Chinese and Korean people but a traditional one which had been used in East Asian tradition long before the Catholics adopted the term to name the monotheistic Christian God. However, as Catholicism entered into East Asian soil, the term Ch'önju replaced Deus and gradually accommodated and was prevalent as a Christian name of God. In this sense, Ch'önju in Catholicism is a Chinese expression of Deus, which, as Lee claims, needs to be distinguished from that of Tonghak. For further discussion, see Lee Sae-kwon, Tonghak Thought, pp. 64-70.

86 Quoted by Ryu, Tonghak and Ch'ondogyo, pp. 202; Chung Kyong-il, The Theological Approach to the Life Thought of Tonghak [동학생명사상에 대한 신학적 접근], Th. M Thesis (1995), Hanshin University.

87 The representative scholars are Yun Sông-bôm, Christianity and Korean Thought [기독교와 한국사상] (Seoul, Korea: Taehan Kidogyo Söhoe, 1964); Choe Sŏk-u,
stemmed from Western Catholicism and formulated its doctrine under the shadow of Catholicism. Some scholars who belong to this group understand that the monotheistic aspect of Tonghak is a production of Western Catholicism, which gradually changed to a pantheistic mode as it was taken over by the later leaders, Haewol and Uiam.88

However, they assert that Suun’s theism is, at least, a direct consequence of the Western perception of God as a transcendent personal being, the sole source of life, who governs the world, and is concerned with the benevolence and malevolence of human life. Also, ideas of human equality, women’s liberation, and the abolition of social classism, all presented in Tonghak, are said to be derived from modern Western thought. Moreover, according to this argument, Suun’s traditional understanding of nature, which includes the idea of the union between objects and self, is transformed by Western scientific thinking, which distinguishes subject from object. Suun’s understanding of human beings as the highest expression of Ultimate Ki is also said to be based on the anthropocentrism originating from the naturalism of Western philosophy.89

88 Suun’s panentheistic understanding of God was further developed by later successors—Haewol and Uiam—who created other unique theistic concepts, namely, Yang Ch’ŏnju (nurturing or embodying God) and Che Ch’ŏnju (becoming Heaven or God) and In Nae Ch’ŏn (Humanity is Heaven).
In addition, for them, the parish (diocese) system and its structure, ritual similarities such as Sunday worship, references to the Bible, and the use of the term *Ch'ŏnju*, etc. are considered decisive indications of Catholic influence over *Tonghak*. Considering the historical context of Suun's time, it is impossible to deny, it is argued, the Western influence on *Tonghak* thought. They stress the fact that *Tonghak* was created as a response to the influx of Western thought, and Suun himself was well aware of the core ideas of Catholic teaching. In particular, the word *Ch'ŏnju* seemed to be adopted from the Catholic name of God in order to enhance the personal characteristics of *Hanŭnim* of *Tonghak*, to meet the contextual needs of the people.

However, scholars belonging to the second group\(^9\) criticize the interpretation of the first group, who simply suggest a colonized mind-set, contending instead that *Tonghak* is a Korean indigenous religion inherited from the *Hanŭnim* faith and other traditional East Asian religions. They argue that *Tonghak* is rooted in the tradition of the syncretic union of three religions: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and should be presented as a unique development of Korean religion without dropping of the Western

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\(^9\) For further discussion, see Im Jae-bae, *The Comparative Study of Tonghak and Western Thought* [동학과 서구사상의 비교연구], M.A. Thesis (1995), Kugbang University, pp. 83-91.

influence. Vigorous emphasis is laid on the uniqueness of Tonghak thought, while relativizing the religio-cultural influence of Catholicism. For example, they attempt to highlight Suun’s criticism of Catholicism, in particular in relation to the political attack of the Western world. For Suun, Catholicism is called Sóhak (Western learning/西學) associated with socio-political imperialism and domination. He made highly critical comments on Catholicism saying, e.g., “the nefarious westerners who claimed they were working for God deliberately attacked and diminished China in order to build up churches and the spread of their belief. Now, I am wondering how those who believe in God could do such evil things?…” Also, Suun criticizes the idea of God’s transcendence in Catholicism, which merely encourages prayer for life after death and, as a result, leads people into indifference toward earthly life, thereby distorting a more authentic Korean way of thinking. Moreover, the individualistic features of Western culture were highly problematic for Suun, because they diluted the importance of ancestor worship and other traditional values of Korean culture.

In conjunction with the term Ch’ónju of Tonghak, Ryu provides an interpretation which disconnects the Western association from the term. According to him, the word Ch’ón indicates Heaven, which Korean people have worshipped from primordial times, and Ju is an honorary appellation which carries a meaning equivalent to the Korean word nim, e.g., in the word Hamûnim. As explained above, Suun mentioned that Ju (Lord) means serving God in the same manner as honoring parents. In the Tonggōng Taejôn, written in Chinese, the term Ch’ónju appeared 14 times, whereas in another text,

91 Choe Suun, Tonggyŏng Taejôn, chapter on P’odŏgmun [Writing on Conveying Virtue]
92 Choe Suun, Tonggyŏng Taejôn, chapter on Nonhagmun [Writing on Learning]
Youngdam Yusa, written in Korean, the word Hanımim is used 34 times. Here, Ryu points out Suun’s consistent use of the Korean term Hanımim in Youngdam Yusa, which also implies that Ch’önju is the written Chinese word which means Hanımim in Korean. This characterizes the term Ch’önju in terms of the traditional Hanımim faith which, Ryu affirms, is a Chinese expression of the Korean word Hanımim rather than an outcome of Western Catholicism.

The Ch’önju of Catholicism is merely a phonetic expression of Chinese for Deus, which appeared for the first time in Ch’önju Silrok (천주실록/天主實錄) in 1583. Therefore, in their view, the use of the same term Ch’önju indicates the Korean indigenous God Hanımim, identical with the Confucian term Sangje, whose personal characteristics are fully explored in Tonghak thought. How then is Ch’önju of Tonghak different from that of Catholicism, despite using the same terms? Let us hear Suun’s criticism of Catholicism first. He said,

...although Western learning seems similar to ours [Tonghak: Eastern learning], it is fundamentally different. In Western learning, neither an order of speaking [logic] nor the principle of thinking [philosophy] can be found. There is no teaching on the sincere heart devoted to God but a selfish praying for oneself. There is also neither the mysterious power of the movement of ki operative within a human body nor a teaching on God for it merely remains a theoretical doctrine. Accordingly, the Tao of

93 Ryu, Tonghak and Ch’ŏndogyo. p. 203.
94 According to Book, “…in Western word, God is called as Deus…” Ryu, Ibid., p. 203.
95 Ryu, Ibid., pp. 202-203.
Western learning is close to the idea of nihility (empty thought) due to the absence of the teaching of waiting on God.97

In Suun's view, the individualistic and totally transcendent characteristics of Catholicism, which, as he saw them, are merely concerned with life after death, were highly problematic and inappropriate in the Korean context, which was marked by enormous oppression derived from both internal political corruption and external threats from Japan and the Western world. Suun's trenchant view of Catholicism was not original to him, but resembled the criticism which was prevalent among Confucian scholars prior to Suun. For instance, in the 1750s, Shin Hu-dam criticized the doctrine of Catholicism that the human soul after death is going either to Heaven or to Hell, as absolutely absurd for Korean people.

Moreover, other teachings of Catholicism, such as the abandonment of ancestor worship, caused an uproar among Confucian scholars, who believed honoring parents and ancestors to be a fundamental principle of human life and essential to the realization of the Tao. Therefore, Shin Hu-dam seriously admonished people not to let themselves be contaminated by the deceptive teaching of Western learning.98 In 1788, Lee Kyông-myông appeared before the King, urging him to abolish the practice of Catholicism, condemning it as a vicious religion. In 1801, Catholicism was eventually rejected officially as a malicious teaching which misled people into living in a manner contrary to morality: "...the malicious religion, [Western Catholicism] which people are talking about at present teaches people to refuse to honor father [parents] and King, which

97 Choe Suun, Tōnggōng Taejŏn, chapter on Nonhagmun [Writing on Learning]

transgresses a basic human morality. This is the same teaching which encourages people to become like savages or animals..."99

Of course, the Western Catholicism which Confucian scholars and Suun criticized was, in fact, a very particular brand of Catholicism introduced through missionary activities. Accordingly, their understandings and criticisms of Catholicism were very limited and narrow from today's point of view. In this respect, we should note the general character of Catholicism which prevailed in Suun's time.

First, Western Catholicism was seen as preposterous in terms of the idea of the incarnation of Heaven [God] as a person [Jesus] and of the existence of Heaven and Hell. Secondly, the fundamental faith of Catholicism relies on God's unconditional forgiveness of one's original sin and Divine grace, which offers a universal salvation without human merit. Thirdly, the worship of a monotheistic God, which discourages ancestor worship and kingship, is opposed to basic human morality. Fourthly, the idea of the celibacy of the Catholic priesthood was seen to destroy the lineage of one's family, and a certain unrestrained atmosphere, such as sitting together without "distinguishing gender,"100 is socially disturbing. Fifthly, Catholicism functions as a medium of political imperialism for the Western nations. Sixthly, Catholics organize impure groups among those who conceal their identity with adopted names (i.e., baptismal names). Suun, who was a Confucian scholar, was also obviously influenced by these criticisms of Catholicism which were predominant in his time.101

99 The Royal Record of Chosôn [조선 왕조 실록], quoted by Ryu, p. 194.

100 Gender distinction is an important notion in a Confucian society.

101 Im Jae-bae, The Comparative Study of Tonghak and Western Thought [동학사상과
Nevertheless, despite these differences between Catholicism and Suun, there is an important identification of the latter with the former. Suun says, “I share with them [Catholics] in Tao but differ from them in li (principle).”\(^{102}\) That is, the ultimate purposes of the two approaches are the same, but how each achieves it is different. This statement of Suun is noteworthy when we consider the profound difference between the theism of Suun and that of Catholicism. In other words, Suun’s understanding of Ch’ö nju similar to that of Catholicism in terms of affirming a personal God who is deeply concerned with the liberation or salvation of the oppressed. However, the distinctive feature of Suun’s theism is the idea of Kihwa jisin (the mutation of ki itself is "God"; "God" in process/기화지신/氣化之神), which presents a radically different vision of “God” from the monotheistic God of Catholicism, at least the Catholicism of that time.

In the idea of Kihwa jisin ("God" in process), the spontaneous movement of the Ultimate Ki itself, is identified with “God,” who is comprised by or comprises the movement of the Ultimate Ki. The Ultimate Ki, which can be characterized both as matter and spirit, is the basic component which constitutes all the myriad of things. For Suun, the Ultimate Ki is also life which is fulfilled in the world. Life is not a static but a dynamic entity which is constantly in process within the cycle of birth and death. As mentioned above, “God” for Suun can be described as the fullness of the Ultimate Ki, and the process or operation of the Ultimate Ki. For Suun, it is essential that the Ultimate Ki descends upon human beings and leads them to the world of divine ecstasy. With this

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\(^{102}\) Choe Suun, “道即同也而造 理即非夜 나라.” Tonggyöng Taejön, chapter on Nonhagmun [Writing on Learning].
experience, human beings are able to wait on (Shi) the Ultimate Ki. This is the first step, in Suun’s belief, to becoming divine beings, which is achieved through one’s holistic cultivation of purifying ki. The relationship between God and the world is not conceived in a hierarchical or antagonistic, but in a collaborative or reciprocal way. This is a distinctive aspect of Suun’s theism, which maintains the continuity or union between God and human beings or world.

The unique feature of Suun’s theism, Kihwaqisin, culminates in the thought of Osim juk Yôsim (오심즉여심/吾心即如心) drawn from his mystical experience, which means, “my [Ch’ônju or Sangje] mind is your [Suun or human’s] mind.” Lee Don-hwa, a Tonghak scholar, points out that the personal God of Tonghak cannot be adequately explained only by recourse to the claims that God is a transcendent anthropomorphic God whose ontological existence is sharply distinguished from humans. Suun’s God can also be depicted as immanent natural ki which is fully exhibited in humanity. In other words, a human being is the best existential example on which God’s ontological nature is well expressed. Such interpretation of God and the world is rooted in the notion of Osim juk Yôsim which Lee explains as follows:

...Human beings are dependent on God (Hanûnim). Humanity is the closest image reflecting God’s very nature. However, this does not imply that even the incomplete personality of a human being, which is vulnerable or corrupted, is part of God, but means the human possibility of becoming God, because they share the homogeneous spirit of God, the Ultimate Ki. This process leads to God...  

103 Choe Suun, “曰吾心이 即汝心也라.” Ibid.

This statement affirms the immanent existence of God residing in the world. Suun often criticized the idea that God exists somewhere up there in some "other or totally transcendent world," governing everything in the world in a perfect way. This interpretation for him was absurd, for God is truly in this perilous world, with the poor and the oppressed, rather than living outside of the world. According to Suun, God dwells in the human mind, which is identical with the mind of God. There is no human mind apart from God and no mind of God separate from human mind. God does not exist in a paradise, but in human minds, which are in the process of becoming divine. The immanent trait of God for Suun is apparently exposed with the concept of kwisin.

Suun teaches that the self-governing activity of ki itself is God. He says, "kwisin is no other than the totality of Heaven and earth as well as its yin and yang." His "epiphanic experience," in which he heard the voice of the Ultimate Ki saying "contrary to the general understanding that the totality of Heaven and Earth and the being of kwisin are unrelated, kwisin is also I (Ch'önju or Sangje)." Thus, the Ultimate Ki is the harmony of the cosmic principle underlying the reality of change and process through which all things came into being. Attenuating the transcendent characteristics of God, without eliminating the anthropomorphic image of God, the God of Suun is depicted as both the transcendence and immanence of the Ultimate Ki.

105 Choe Suun, "천지 역시 귀신이오 귀신역시 음양인 줄 이같이 듣는데니..." Yongdam Yusa, chapter on Todögga [The Song of Ethics/도덕가].

106 Choe Suun, "知天地而無知鬼神 하니 鬼神者도 품이로라." Tonggyöng Taejön, chapter on Nonhagmun [Writing on Learning].

According to Kim Kyong-jae, the doctrine of Shi Ch'ônju can be understood in two ways. First, it can be interpreted, “to wait on God sincerely like parents.” Second, it can be interpreted to mean, “pay attention to God who already resides in all human beings,” since God is present in any human being and in nature. This is an essential tenet of Tonghak: “Everyone can wait on God with her/his body.” The first interpretation tends to stress the transcendent aspect of God, while the second emphasizes its immanent aspect. However, for Suun, again, the two characteristics of God cannot be interpreted in a dualistic way, for the two cannot be thought of separately from each other. For this reason, Suun's theism belongs to the category of panentheism in which both transcendent and immanent aspects of God are observed.

The God of Suun, as illustrated by the doctrine of Shi Ch'ônju, therefore, is One who participates in the process of all forms of life. This power to change or move, following Whitehead's notion, is not a coercive one; it is instead the power to ceaselessly care for the well-being of all beings. All the world's formations and changes are included in the process of becoming God. Accordingly, Suun experienced the God who constantly reveals the transcendent essence of the divine mind in a mysterious way through human beings, who represent the highest stage of the evolutionary process.

There is a certain affinity between this concept of an anthropomorphic God and the one which Western panentheism affirms. Suun describes God as One who possesses certain personal attributes, this God is truly One who can never be totally transcendent, but immanently transcendent and transcendentally immanent in God's relationship with the world. In other words, this God is not the “wholly Other,” but the “beyond and yet

within" Spirit of life. For Suun, God is seldom regarded as completely separated from humans and nature. This aspect is quite similar to McFague’s interpretation of God as the embodied Spirit. This panentheistic Spirit of God becomes more obvious when we consider the scripture of Tonghak as a whole. Hanunim for Suun can be interpreted as the Ultimate Ki, as the panentheistic Spirit who leads the liberation of the minjung, and further brings harmony into the universe.

3-4 The Ultimate Ki and Yang Ch’ónju (Nurturing or Embodying God)

The unique contribution of Suun’s successor, Haewol is the secularization of Suun’s Shi Ch’ónju in order to bring forth its ethical implications, which include human equality, woman’s liberation, and ecological concern. Since the major teaching of Haewol Choe Shi-hyong (1827-1898 CE) is closely connected to the practical applicability of Suun’s thought, I shall highlight Haewol’s main ethical ideas and extend his thought in the following chapter. The main ideas here are Yang Ch’ónju, Samgyŏng thought (three kinds of reverence)—reverence for Heaven, human beings, and objects—Sain Yŏch’ón (사인여천/使人如天)—treating humans as Heaven, and Hanga Sŏhwi (향아성위/向我設位)—ritual towards oneself.

Like Suun, Haewol did not remain under the shadow of classic Confucianism but attempted to actualize Suun’s thought into the concrete life of the people. Haewol extensively reinterpreted the doctrine of Shi Ch’ónju to develop the notion of Yang Ch’ónju, focusing on the immanent presence of the Ultimate Ki in a way that seems

108 Some Tonghak scholars argue that the doctrine of Yang Ch’ónju appeared after 1871.
closer to the category of pantheism.\textsuperscript{109} *Yang Ch'onju* literally means “to wait on the Ultimate Ki within.” Haewol expresses the idea that all people possess a divine reality by birth. The individual needs to nourish this divine reality in order to *Yang*, “nurture” or “embody” the Ultimate *Ki* within. He offers an analogy of a “seed and life” for the understanding of *Yang*. According to him, if one is able to wait on God, s/he should also be able to nurture God, who dwells in the human mind as the Ultimate *Ki*. This is similar to the kernel of life which resides inside a seed. Just as a seed is planted in soil to facilitate its growth, the human mind needs to nurture the Ultimate *Ki* to achieve Tao. Although all people possess the Ultimate *Ki*, those who do not realize the fact that they are part of the *Hamínim* and thus refuse to nurture the *ki* are like farmers who throw seeds into the river only to allow them to die. Therefore, only those who sincerely nurture the Ultimate *Ki* are able to recognize that they are becoming divine-human beings.\textsuperscript{110} This shows that Haewol rejects any discrimination given by birth or social status and merely

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\textsuperscript{109} The reason for emphasizing the immanence of God is perhaps that *Tonghak* was persecuted by reason of being associated with Catholics. Choe Shi-hyong desperately attempted to clear that misunderstanding. Consequently, Haewol might have disassociated himself from the thought of *Shi Ch'onju*, which stressed the transcendent character of God in order to be approved by the monarchy as a legitimate Korean religion. The immanent aspect of God is further emphasized in Uiam’s thought who is the third leader. Lee Hyuk-bae, *The Study of Ch'ondogyo Theism*, pp. 30-31.

\textsuperscript{110} Lee, *The Founding History of Ch'ondogyo* [천도교 창건사], (Seoul: Ch'ondogyo Chungang Chongliwon, 1933), p. 36.
relies on human efforts to cultivate Shi (waiting on) and Yang (nurturing) in order to become one with God.

Emphasizing the immanence of God's Spirit, the Ultimate ki, that resides in human beings without prejudice, Haewol advocates the idea of human equality on the basis that all people share the same ki of Hanûnim. He subsequently insists on the abolition of social classism, which was commonly practiced in the nineteenth century Korean society. He preaches as follows:

Since all human beings are in the process of becoming Hanûnim, social classism, which distinguishes people based on their birth and family-lineage is exactly opposed to the good will of Hanûnim. Therefore, we have to struggle to eradicate the unjust social caste system and to promote the idea of human equality in order to bring divine harmony to this world.\(^{111}\)

Haewol's assertion, rooted in the thought of Suun, is a revolutionary proposal for human liberation, considering the social context of Korea in the nineteenth century. During that period, the sharp distinction between yangban (the aristocratic) and sangnom (the plebeian or the vulgar) was maintained as an ideological tool for maintaining the existing social hierarchy. Moreover, women and children were of very low social status. Despite the rigid social ostracism of the vulgar, women, and children (particularly illegitimate children), Haewol advocates that all human beings are able to become divine beings through their sincere cultivation of the Ultimate Ki, coming from Hanûnim but residing within. Such ideas become more obvious in his sermons as follows:

One day, when I visited my friend, I heard the sound of weaving on a loom made by my friend's daughter-in-law. I asked, "Is Hanûnim

\(^{111}\) Lee, The Founding History of Ch'ŏndogyo, p. 7.
weaving on a loom? Or is it your daughter-in-law? My friend did not understand what I meant. I was sure he is not the only one who did not understand. 112

Acknowledge that all human beings are divine. If you have a visitor, you may say that Hanûnim visits you. Also, do not batter children, for this is the same as battering Hanûnim. 113

For him, strangers, children, and women weaving on a loom all share the same Ultimate Ki of Hanûnim, which leads them to become divine beings. As his sermons indicate, Haewol led people to realize the importance and value of human labour, which was disregarded in Korean society, and taught that the creative activity of human beings themselves is a process that participates in God's creative activity. In conjunction with this, Haewol consequently reformed the old method of the Confucian ritual which places an altar towards the wall which symbolizes "transcendence," "other world" or "paradise." He created a radically new form of the ritual in a very radical manner by changing the direction of the altar toward "oneself" rather than the wall. This carries significant philosophical meaning, which suggests that Hanûnim cannot be found in a transcendent world alienated from the earthly human world but within ourselves as a cosmic breath of life, the Ultimate Ki. 114

The philanthropic philosophy of Haewol becomes an archetype of neo-humanism which is formulated together with Samgyöng (삼경/三敬), reverence for life, that is,

112 Ibid., p 36.
113 Ibid, 40-41.
reverence for Heaven, for humans, and for all things in the world. This is a step further toward the idea that the world is an organic ecological whole. In particular, this philosophy emphasizes ecological consciousness, since it teaches people to respect and to care for nature in the same way that they must care for God. Reverence for life is also reflected in the liberative conscious notion of Sain Yŏch'ŏn, which teaches that humans, as well as the eco-system, should be treated as divine. The idea of reverence for life, that is, reverence for Heaven, for humans, and for all things in the world, supports the contention that the world is an organic ecological whole. This is certainly a new interpretation of Suun's thought, stressing the immanent aspect of the Ultimate Ki. Haewol's pantheistic thought is further expressed in his sermons. He preached,

The universe is a spiritual living being in an organic whole, and the spiritual being works in harmony. The living world is the actualizing manifestation of the living Spirit, Hanunim. Is it only human to wait on Ch'ŏnju? The entire universe waits on Ch'ŏnju as well. It is the principle of the universe that one eats Ch'ŏn (Heaven) by Ch'ŏn. Therefore, if you hurt or injure a living being, you are hurting Ch'ŏnju.115

From the beginning, Haewol insists that the Ultimate Ki cannot exist without humanity and the world, and vice versa. Furthermore, Haewol extends the notion of Shi Ch'ŏnju to Yang Ch'ŏnju, including all creatures and everything in nature. Haewol frequently preached on this theme, as in the following:

Even the song of a bird possesses the sound of waiting on the Ultimate ki. It is not only humans who possess the divine image but all creatures. Therefore, eating things means participating in divinity. We should not harm all forms of life, even insignificant small forms, without any reason.

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This is regarded as the same as harming Hanùnim, and is contrary to the divine Harmony.\textsuperscript{116}

This means that all the myriad creatures are able to wait on the Ultimate Ki within. That is, all creatures possess the divine reality. If the doctrine of Shi Ch'ônju focuses on the particular human capacity to wait on the Ultimate Ki, Yang Ch'ônju does not restrict this capacity solely to humans but extends it to all creatures of the universe. In this respect, Haewol's thought comes closer to an Ultimate Ki-centred pantheism and expresses a more radical immanence than that of Suun.

We have seen that the Ultimate Ki, which is to be distinguished from the Chinese notion of ki, carries panentheistic characteristics and the idea of life-giving energy. This discussion presents the view that the philosophy of the Ultimate Ki fosters a distinct type of spirituality, that is, a unique way of attaining to its transcendence. The idea of the transcendence of the Ultimate Ki is closely associated with the fulfillment of humanity, emphasizing the ethical dimension of the human being. The differences and similarities between the Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate Ki will be further considered in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR
PANENTHEISTIC PNEUMATOLOGIES IN DIALOGUE

This chapter consists of two sections as follows: first, Korean Christian panentheistic Ki-pneumatology (thereinafter, Ki-pneumatology) as a fruit of the dialogue between the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate Ki; secondly, liberating and holistic dimensions of the Ki-pneumatology including its essential elements. The first section is an attempt to propose a Ki-pneumatology through a dialogue between Western contemporary panentheistic theologians and Korean Tonghak panentheistic thinkers. Through this dialogue I will demonstrate how Western and Korean traditions have developed quite differently the ideas of Holy Spirit and of the Ultimate Ki, and yet how they may be referring to one and the same reality. Of course, I shall not suggest that the “Holy Spirit” and the “Ultimate Ki” can be simply equated, but shall search for a “functional equivalence” with which a mutually transforming “interreligious dialogue” can begin to construct a Korean Christian contextual pneumatology in accordance with the syncretic method of “confluence.”

In this discussion, we will find that both Western and Korean panentheistic concepts affirm the transcendent-immanent aspect of God as the life-giving Spirit. Also, both of these pneumatologies accentuate the inadequacy of Christian classical theism mainly characterized by God’s “perfection,” “immutability,” “absoluteness,” and so on. We will also observe the differences between the two pneumatologies, i.e., the Western Christian notion of God as the Creator and the world as creation, and the Korean traditional notion of the self-spontaneous formation of God and the world. The distinctive characteristics of the Ki-pneumatology shall be addressed in particular. For
instance, whereas Western panentheism generally sees God as the Creator who embraces the world into God's depth, without compromising God's sovereignty, this particular Korean panentheism affirms the "non-duality" of Hanunim and the world. In order to clarify this, I shall deal with the ontological and cosmological dimensions of this Korean panentheism, which exhibits some aspects distinct from Western panentheism. The difference between Western and Korean pneumatologies should be regarded not as a source of conflict but as a basis for mutual fulfillment. That is, in accordance with the notion of confluence, recognizing their differences should not be a hindrance, but a stepping stone to enriching our understanding of God as the life-giving Spirit.

The second section is devoted to a discussion of the theological implications of Ki-pneumatology in relation to Christian theological criteria, i.e., christological, soteriological, and eschatological implications. I shall further explain the liberating and holistic aspects of the Ki-pneumatology. The ethical aspect of the Ki-pneumatology has to do with the liberation of humanity, in particular the minjung; the ecological aspect has to do with holistic liberation/salvation, since it leads humanity to a union both with nature (the ecosystem) and with divinity. The Ki-pneumatology in dialogue with the Christian scripture and tradition will be fruitful for the Korean context, because of its cultural relevance, especially for the minjung tradition.

1. Toward an Ontological Confluence of Western and Eastern Panentheisms

I have shown that the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate Ki find their common ground in the idea of the life-giving Spirit, and yet have been distinctively developed, each in its own cultural and philosophical framework. As discussed above, the biblical concepts of
the Holy Spirit (\textit{ruah} and \textit{pneuma}) and Moltmann's and McFague's pneumatologies, are understood within the framework of Western panentheism: \textit{God is in all things and all things are in God, yet God is more than the universe}. This idea of panentheism is not a totally new concept but a combined philosophical notion, created in the struggle between pantheism and classical theism in the nineteenth century. A certain degree of philosophical continuity exists between classical and neo-classical concepts of God. The primary purpose of Western panentheism is to overcome the inadequacies and contradictions of classical theism while incorporating its insights. Western panentheism contains a strategic intention to hold together the possibility of the moral autonomy of human beings and the ontological predominance of God.\footnote{Donald Wayne Viney, \textit{Charles Hartshorne and the Existence of God} (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1988), p. 27.}

While Western panentheism was developed explicitly in the particular context of the nineteenth century, which called for an alternative form of theism, Korean panentheistic philosophy grew out of a different cultural context in the same century. As mentioned earlier, the Korean concept of the Ultimate \textit{Ki} had its beginning in a synthesis of various elements of traditional East Asian religions, incorporating, in particular, the Neo-Confucian materialistic interpretation of \textit{ki}, which had been dominant throughout the \textit{Chos\'on} period in Korea. The unique aspect of the Ultimate \textit{Ki} is the combination of an anthropomorphic or personal God, \textit{Han\'nim}, and the impersonal \textit{ki}.

While a fully developed Korean Christian pneumatology is the project of a lifetime, and beyond the scope of this thesis, I shall attempt to identify criteria, and stretch the broad outlines of such a pneumatology. Although both the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate \textit{Ki} are presented within the category of panentheism, the conceptual framework
of each tradition carries distinctive cultural assumptions. Each tradition has been developed in terms of a complicated metaphysical structure, with differing cultural roots and sources. Some of the distinctive aspects of the Ki-pneumatology based on Tonghak tradition will be presented.

1-1. Life-giving Spirit of “Beyond and yet Within”: Dialogue

Now I wish to elaborate the unique aspects of the Ki-pneumatology in dialogue with the Western doctrines of the Holy Spirit. I shall relate them to the contemporary Western pneumatologies of Moltmann and McFague, rather than the whole history of biblical and Western Christian pneumatology. The focus of this dialogue is to explore a richer and fuller metaphysical concept of the Holy Spirit in a Korean way. I shall deal with the ontological and cosmological issues regarding the panentheistic nature of the Ultimate Ki, drawing upon the thoughts of the Tonghak leaders.

One of the important characteristics of the Ki-pneumatology is the “transcendent and immanent” Spirit of life. This particular aspect is congenial with both Moltmann and McFague. Of course, some sinologists like David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames would be critical of this attempt to interpret the philosophy of the Ultimate Ki with the binary concepts of transcendence and immanence. According to them, the binary categories of transcendence and immanence are not quite appropriate for describing the non-dual nature of East Asian philosophy. They argue that the contrast of transcendence and immanence is derived from Anglo-European tradition, and suggests an “asymmetrical relationship” between God and the world. In particular, the idea of transcendence, which
generally means "surpassing," "going beyond," or "beyond experience," is deeply rooted in Western theological traditions, referring to God's total independence from the created order. Strictly speaking, such transcendence is foreign, and the use of the terms "transcendence" and "immanence" bring about significant interpretive distortions in most contexts of East Asia.  

Although these scholars point out that the term "transcendence" is inappropriate and problematic in the East Asian cultural context, I believe it is still appropriate and useful in the following three ways: 1) the self-spontaneity of the Ultimate Ki; 2) the state of perfect harmony, which is theoretically within reach but in reality never complete in any human community; and 3) that by which humans always find themselves in need of self-cultivation. Of course, all these three, especially the latter two, are closely related; the second is more collective and the third more individual. The difference between this "Korean transcendence" and the "Western transcendence" is that while, at least in theory, there is an unbroken continuity between immanence and transcendence for the former, the latter includes a discontinuity between the world and that which is transcendent to this world. Despite the differences between Korean and Western understanding of transcendence, the conceptual polarity can still be applicable to the concept of the Ultimate Ki, because it specifically synthesizes the transcendent personal God, Hanunim, and immanent natural ki within itself.

As we have seen, the idea of Korean transcendence is well represented in Hanunim ("God" in Korean) faith or Ch'ónju (Chinese expression of Hanunim).

*Hanûnim* in the philosophy of the Ultimate *Ki* is not conceived as a self-transcendent being in terms of a “first cause” or “original substance.” This term, *Hanûnim*, needs to be understood in connection with the Ultimate *Ki*. *Hanûnim* is an anthropomorphic expression for the Ultimate *Ki*. Since the Ultimate *Ki* can be described as the root from which the myriad of creatures are generated, it should not be misread to represent a kind of absolute immutable substance. The Ultimate *Ki* is present in all experience and, therefore, cannot be restricted to the particular realm called the primordial pure world of the divine.³ *Hanûnim* as the personification of the Ultimate *Ki*, therefore, is not ontologically categorized as an absolute transcendent creator of the world. Rather, *Hanûnim* is a supreme Spirit of life, “beyond and yet within,” who is never conceived apart from the world. The idea of deity or the affirmation of the existence of God is always understood in connection with human life. A Korean description of transcendence does not require the concept of God as an independent entity creating the world out of nothing, but affirms the mysterious nature of God who is the formless abyss out of which all forms of life are generated and sustained. This understanding precludes anything determinately transcendent of the world and eliminates the traditional ontological dualism between God and the world.

The idea of *Muwi Ihwa* (無為以化; spontaneity) entails the mysterious nature of *Hanûnim* with the emphasis on the self-creating aspect of the Ultimate *Ki*. Although Suun believes that beings are generated and completed by the Ultimate *Ki*, for him, it cannot be explained clearly. It is a mystery. One of the central ways to describe the living presence of the Ultimate *Ki* is the idea of *Muwi Ihwa* (spontaneity), which applies

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to both the divine and the human realms. In referring to the transcendent-immanent mystery of reality, for Suun, such ambiguous expressions were the best descriptions.

In this respect, this Korean interpretation of the Hanûnim-world relation can be described as an "anthropocentric and nature-oriented mysticism." It is anthropocentric not in the negative sense of selfish human arrogance which has no ecological concern, but in the sense of an orientation toward serving and relating to human life. At the centre there is always a concern for the cosmic harmony, including human existence. Perhaps the famous Confucian dictum "humanity makes the Tao great, not that Tao makes humanity great" (Analects 15; 28) is helpful in understanding the prevalent religiosity of East Asian culture, which entails the relational and mysterious nature of the union of the Ultimate reality or God and the world.

Far from entailing the conceptual dualism of the traditional interpretation of transcendence, the immanence of the Ultimate Ki is, as explained earlier, emerged with the mystical experience of Osim jûk Yôsim (union with God) and the concept of kwisin (ghosts-spirits). In that experience, Suun falls into a spiritual ecstasy in which the boundaries between transcendent and immanent fields become blurred, and whatever might be constructed as transcendent in Hanûnim faith is not independent of this world, nor is it theocentric. The Ultimate Ki operates as the ongoing active creation and as the creativity to sustain the cosmic harmony rather than the simple instantiation of what is theistically given to the human world. Kwisin is also another phenomenon of the dynamic nature of the Ultimate Ki which is an ongoing creative process that both stimulates and is affected by the synergistic interface between human mind and the movement of the Ultimate Ki.
The enlightened state for Suun is a key concept for entering into union or harmony with the Ultimate reality which results in the transformation of the self. This is not a denial of the transcendent existence of the divine, but a Korean way of understanding the relation between the divine and the human world without a sharp ontological disparity. Suun is, of course, aware of the difference between the two worlds but not in an ontological sense. From the viewpoint of the Ultimate Ki, for Suun, the difference consists in the transformation of self by the cultivation of one's mind and purification of one's ki (Sushim Chonggi/수심정기/修心正氣) which takes place when the boundary between the two become one. In other words, "humanity can participate in the creativity of the universe as a cosmotheandric agent of the highest order." In this mystical state, one comes to realize that everything in the world belongs to the same spirit of the Ultimate Ki and its actualization. The state of harmony of the Ultimate Ki accentuates the notion of the transformation of self through the process of becoming God. In the immanent dimension of the Ultimate Ki, any radical notion of "otherness" becomes illusive, and the continuity and the mutual relationship between the Ultimate reality (Hanûnim, Sangje, or Ch'ônju) and humanity is fully explored as it is expressed in the mystical experience of Osim jûk Yûsim and kwisin.

The panentheistic nature of the Ultimate Ki exhibits some notable similarities with both Moltmann and McFague in terms of emphasizing the "beyond and yet within" presence of the Spirit of God. As explained earlier, the panentheistic Spirit of God, for both Moltmann and McFague, is distinct from the world in an ontological sense, but it is also true to say that the Spirit intimately relates her/himself to the world. The Spirit of

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God is not only present as the transcendent entity, the primary source, animating other forms of life, preserving her/his own providence, but also affirms the "transcendent immanence." Both Moltmann and McFague, again, in their different ways, emphatically propose a radical immanence of the Spirit in their panentheism without compromising or reducing God's transcendence. Despite the subtle theological differences between them within the Western panentheistic tradition, there is a clear attempt by both to seek a togetherness of God and the world. They both emphasize that the concept of God as the life-giving Spirit includes attributes of contingency while preserving room for immanent transcendence. This paradoxical interrelation of the transcendent immanence and the immanent transcendence of the Spirit of God can be found both in the concept of the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate Ki. Perhaps the point at which they are distinguishable is their differing emphasis on the two poles of the reality. The immanent aspects are more essential for Korean panentheistic thinkers, whereas the transcendent aspects of God are more foundational for Western panentheististic theologians.

Nevertheless, the panentheistic Spirit of God affirmed by both Moltmann/McFague and Suun/Haewol is clearly distinguishable from the major theologians of classical Christian traditions (Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, etc). Although these classical theists anticipate a panentheistic perception of the Spirit in the notion of omnipresence, the predominant feature of their monotheism is the principle of externality, which has operated as the normative law of Western theistic thought.⁵

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⁵ The law of causality in Western tradition is involved in three things: sufficiency and necessity of conditions; efficacy of motion and force; priority in time. For further discussion of this philosophical argument of the causality in Western tradition, see David L. Hall & Roger T. Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987).
Although the classical theologians mentioned above affirm the divine presence in the world through the Spirit, they persistently hold the idea of the "externality" or "otherness" of God who is the absolute cause of all objects of this physical world. The principle of externality explains that all things conform to the law of self-sufficient cause and are determined by it. God as the eternal and almighty Other has the power to create new forms of life. Pointing out the inadequacies of classical theism, both Moltmann/McFague and Korean Tonghak thinkers commonly see the need for revision of the classical notion of God's immutability and ontological separation from the world. The fruit of the dialogue between the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate Ki, for both West and East, would be the recognition and affirmation of the "beyond and yet within" as the common ground for a Christian pneumatology for the multi-cultural and ecological age.

1-2. Life-giving Spirit of "Harmony": Dialogue

We have discussed that there are some differences among Moltmann, McFague, Suun, and Haewol, but all of them affirm the panentheistic Spirit and take it as a rich category of their pneumatologies. For example, Moltmann seems to emphasize the idea of "absolute Spirit" in a Neo-Platonic and Hegelian sense. The Spirit of God, for him, is the Life and the Good, not just life and good. Even though Moltmann affirms creatio ex nihilo, his panentheistic construction has sympathy with the Neo-Platonic idea of the One and its emanation.6

In Neo-Platonism, dualism is subsumed within a monism. The monist thinking of

Neo-Platonism views all reality as ultimately One, not twofold as in a dualism. The monistic idea of reality can be understood either in a quantitative or qualitative way. In the sense of quantitative monism, everything is numerically one, and any multiplicity which appears is either illusionary or a transitory phenomenon of the One. This idea blurs the distinction between God and the world and consequently leads to some form of pantheistic or panentheistic understanding. The central notion of Neo-Platonism is that the source and goal of all existence is the One who is absolutely transcendent and is beyond all thought and all being, not only description, but even “being” itself. The One, according to the doctrine of Plotinus, cannot be identified with any individual being or thing, because the One is a Source or Principle which emanates a hierarchy of levels of beings, tending towards multiplicity and aspiring to return to the One. This One thus cannot be any existing entity and must be distinct from and prior to them. Utilizing the metaphor of emanation from Neo-Platonism, Moltmann affirms the idea of the One. Interestingly, however, Moltmann opposes any reductionist position which erodes the absoluteness of God or the distinction of good and evil. He sees this as the danger when everything is treated as one. Rather he holds the language and idea of the transcendent God, rejecting the notion that God is in any way diminished through the process of emanation. For Moltmann, God cannot be reduced by the processes or movements of

7 In the sense of qualitative monism, everything is of one kind, which is either physical or spiritual, or neutral with respect to the matter-spirit distinction. This idea is closely connected to naturalism and materialism and idealism. Perhaps, the qualitative idea of monism is applicable to process thought as well as the metaphysics of *ki*.


9 Ibid., pp. 471-477.
other entities, since she/he is the pure, absolute, undiminished Deity.\textsuperscript{10} It is quite true that for him the world proceeds from God by her/his divine love, and God the prior One maintains "its own place" unimpaired and always transcending the subordinate being.

McFague's understanding of the Spirit of creation, which has recourse to a new scientific interpretation of the origin of the world, is distinctive from that of Moltmann. Both the process philosophical perspective and new scientific knowledge are used as conceptual tools for a new interpretation of the Spirit. Her basic intention is, of course, not only to challenge the traditional notion of God as creating a well-ordered world, but also to promote the importance of the interrelatedness and interdependence of all life-forms.

However, her position becomes ambiguous as she discusses the origin of the Spirit. She seems to be reluctant to say that God is the primary initiator of creation. The common creation story that she adopts supports that understanding. The summary of the story as quoted by McFague is as follows:

In the beginning was the big bang. As matter expanded from that initial singularity it cooled. After about three minutes the world was no longer hot enough to sustain universal nuclear interactions. At that moment its gross nuclear structure got fixed at its present proportion of three quarters hydrogen and one quarter helium. Expansion and further cooling continued. Eventually gravity condensed matter into the first generation of galaxies and stars. In the interiors of these first stars nuclear cookery started up again and produced heavy elements like carbon and iron, essential for life, which were scarcely present in the early stages of the universe's history. Some of these first generation stars and planets condensed in their turn: on at least one of them there were now conditions of chemical composition and temperature and radiation permitting, through the interplay of chance and necessity, the coming into being of replicating molecules and life. Thus evolution began on the planet Earth.

\textsuperscript{10} Moltmann, \textit{The Spirit of Life}, pp. 212-213.
Eventually it led to you and me. We are all made of the ashes of dead stars.¹¹

Emphasizing the scientific, evolutionary approach to creation, McFague rejects the fixation on the origin as the decisive act of creation, based on the obsolete idea that identifies the fullness of reality with the absolute beginning. In her view, the notion of the Creator acting as supreme sovereign, with everything coming forth immediately and perfectly at the divine command, does not correspond to the history of the universe. Hence, God’s creation, for McFague, did not start in perfection. In her alternative procreative-emanationist model of creation, “the empowering, continuing breath of life,” who drives the world in an evolutionary sense, is a more adequate conceptuality.¹² Although McFague does not fully explain how she reaches this conclusion, her perspective on the idea of dynamic and changing (or processing) Spirit seems close to the nature of the dynamic nature of the Ultimate Ki. Her view on the Spirit shares more commonality with the Ultimate Ki than that of Moltmann.¹³

The harmony metaphysics of the Ultimate Ki lies in the dynamic and paradoxical unity of yin and yang. This principle suggests that the harmony of the Ultimate Ki takes place through the interaction of two opposing yet complementary modes, whereby a


¹³ Cheng Chung-yin points out that the idea of the “primordial (or transcendent) nature of God” in process theology is also perceived as a transcending entity, which is derived from Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics. *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1991), p. 538. According to his perspective, it might be said that, although both Moltmann and McFague explicitly criticize the so-called Aristotelian notion of substance, they yet seem to have still been unconsciously
common field of coexistence is formed between them. The interaction between the two continues through mutual, reciprocal support. For example, yin does not transcend yang, nor vice versa. Just as day is “becoming night” and night is “becoming day,” yin is always perceived within the context of “becoming yang” and the yang is always “becoming yin.” Each pole seems to be different, but it is only a different way of existence of the same reality. Each part of the totality contributes to the process of fulfillment of other parts and all parts contribute to the formation of the totality, in the sense of wholeness. The relation of each part to the other parts is possible only with mutual support and recognition, rather than domination or control. The unity of the opposites consequently enables the contrasting natures to form an interrelationship without eliminating the independence of each part.14

This coincidence or unity of opposites is paradoxical in the sense that an opposite entity creates the same harmony by the inter-penetration of the other. When the parts of a whole are elevated to interfuse with other parts, and the whole becomes more actively participatory in the parts, the relation of harmony becomes more creative and fruitful. In this paradoxical harmony of the opposites, a new order of differentiation occurs, without losing the foundation of the unity. This paradoxicality of the Ultimate Ki is perceived as a creative, dynamic power, because it always involves a transformation in a process of life. The authentic coincidence of beings and things is found only in the opposites, and the genuine opposites are observed only in the coincidence or unity.15

influenced by the idea of primary substance-ontology in their theological presuppositions.


15 Cho Young-il, The Study on the Harmony Thought of Tonghak
In other words, unity and opposites are different sides of the same coin, and each becomes the condition for the existence of other. This principle is already discussed in the idea of Pulyön Kiyón (such and such not). This paradoxical principle of the Ultimate Ki is also applicable in dealing with the issue of Hanunim and the world. The idea of harmony is a Korean Tonghak notion of creation, but it is creation without an absolute creator. This suggests that Tonghak understanding of creation is possible without a totally transcendent creator, and the mystical union is possible without an absolute reality to unite with. The only constant reality is the Ultimate Ki in its transformations, the continuous coming and going between its mystical state and its visible state. Hanunim and the world are especially and fundamentally linked to each other. Theologically speaking, Hanunim is both Creator and the field of creatures. All forms of life are not only the creatures of Hanunim but also the constitutions of her/his existence. There is no apparent distinction between the cosmic harmony itself and what makes the harmony. Even Hanunim's supreme transcendence is relational, since Hanunim's existence is dependent upon it in the way in which yin and yang are dependent on each other. In this sense, Hanunim is correlative with the world, uniting with it in order to exist.16

Here, a difference between Moltmann and Suun is observed. Moltmann's panentheistic pneumatology accentuates the fact that the world is created by a transcendent Creator who makes her/himself Creator in the act of creating. Suun's panentheistic pneumatology proposes, instead, that the world is created by the spontaneous activities within its own creating process. In the framework of Moltmann,

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the Holy Spirit is cosmologically creative in her own right but in the sense of both Creator and agent of the Creator. The recognition of an ontological Creator is the uncompromising presupposition of Moltmann’s panentheistic pneumatology, while for Suun, the distinction between Creator and creation is not so significant, because of the monistic and yet multiple aspects of the Ultimate Ki. This understanding is in part congenial with McFague’s “one and many” identity of God. She states that God is not one but many because of the existence of God’s multitudinous bodies. The body of God is not one body, but the infinite number of bodies, all of which constitute the one universe. What McFague rejects here is the transcendent One God, remote and removed from the world. The Spirit is the breath of life which enlivens all things in God’s body. In her “original-agential and procreative-emanationist, spirit-body model,” the Spirit is portrayed as the life-giving power which underlies creation as the continuing, dynamic and processing embodiment of God in and with the evolving world. This idea of “one and many” is further deepened in the next section, in which the most distinctive aspects of the Ki-pneumatology will be seen in the dialogue.

1-3 Life-giving Spirit of “One and Many” : Dialogue

In the Christian tradition of the divine immanence, the Holy Spirit has always held the position of the Third person of the Trinity, which relates not only to the Father, and to the Son, but also to the entire creation in its relational social fellowship.

18 McFague, Ibid., pp. 149-150.
Moltmann, particularly, holds that the three persons of the Trinity are distinguished by their character as persons and yet are one in their interrelation. The strength of Moltmann’s trinitarian pneumatology is in moving beyond the Western tendency to regard the Holy Spirit as just something the Father and the Son share in common, a sort of attribute or function of the other persons. Moltmann successfully presents the Spirit as a Person who can affect the Father and the Son. The Spirit is genuinely one of the three, and not just a power that proceeds from the two. Moreover, the unity of the three is profoundly social, as each of the three is interpenetrated by the other two. This is the trinitarian doctrine of *perichoresis*,¹⁹ which maintains the relational and social character of each member of the Trinity and the function of the mutuality of the three persons.

As we have seen, the Holy Spirit in Western Christian tradition has always been trinitarian in interpersonal relation with the Father and the Son. However, Moltmann is critical of the tradition for being insufficiently trinitarian and for diminishing the specific work of the Spirit. For him, the Spirit dynamically works in history toward God’s reign. The Father here is no longer understood as the patriarchal monarch of the Godhead, who together with the Son breathes the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, receives her/his “form” from “the Father of the Son,” and glorifies the Father and the Son by drawing the redeemed creation into the triune life of God.²⁰ In this relationship, none

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¹⁹ The term *perichoresis* connotes mutual interpenetration or eternal circulation of divine life. Its initial theological use was in the work of Gregory Nazianzen and Maximos Confessor who employed it in connection with the two natures doctrine in christology. For the detailed discussion, see L. Prestige, “*[Perichoreo]* and *[perichoresis]* in the Fathers,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1982), pp. 242-244.

of the divine persons is excluded or subordinated in relation to the other two. This is the inner-trinitarian community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose relations are conceived to be personal in mutual love and utter unity of being.²¹

While Moltmann strongly holds this relational trinitarian perspective, McFague reinterprets it with a gender-inclusive approach. The new names of the relational trinity, as I have mentioned earlier, for McFague, are the mystery of God (the invisible face or first person), the physicality of God (the visible body or second person), and mediation of the invisible and visible (the spirit or third person). Here, a difference from Moltmann is that McFague does not draw particular attention to the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. While the integration of pneumatological christology and christological pneumatology are essential to the social doctrine of Trinity for Moltmann, McFague does not see the importance of stressing the particularity of the “Spirit of Christ,” which is dissolved into the idea of the cosmic Christ. Accordingly, the second person of the Trinity, for McFague, is not merely limited to the person Jesus but extended to the whole of nature. The physicality of God includes the entire cosmos. It is the cosmic Trinity in which God and the world become relational through the work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the trinitarian relationality of the Holy Spirit has always been fundamental to the Christian tradition. On this particular point, one finds a great divergence from the Ki-pneumatology. In this Ki-pneumatology, the number three or the trinitarian formula is not a central issue,²² because the idea of the Ultimate Ki is predominantly conceived as


²² If one insists on the idea of trinity in East Asian culture, that would be Samjae [삼재삼지] which is Heaven, Earth, and human being. This relationship can be seen as an East Asian form of Trinity. For the discussion of an East Asian Trinity, see Lee Jung-young,
One Ki, as the Honwon ji Ilgi (混原之一氣, the One Ki of the primordial chaos), which
fills Heaven, Earth, and human beings. As a basic dynamic the One Ki existed prior to
the world, and everything that exists is only an aspect of it in a lesser or greater state of
condensation and dispersion. Condensed, life is germinated, dispersed, it remains
indefinite potential. The One Ki is here not “one” in a numeric sense, but indicates the
totality of reality, which consequently includes all sorts of multiples. The Oneness of Ki
is not the formless origin but the reciprocal oneness that includes and enfolds
multiplicity.23

The primordial One Ki, as a basic component of the world, creates two opposing
tendencies, yin and yang, and passes through another stage before giving rise to all forms
of life. From the One Ki these tendencies pass, after the division into two, to the
multiplicity, which gives life to the earth. Without this constant movement of the
Ultimate Ki, life cannot be sustained. From the microcosmic to the macrocosmic levels,
existence ultimately hinges on the vital unity of the Ultimate Ki. This dynamic nature of
the Ultimate Ki is behind the process of the world in a chain of successive generations
and is constitutive of the entire cosmos as well as of each element of the world. The

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23 In Korean Neo-Confucian tradition (particularly in Yulgok’s cosmology), the notion
of T’ai-chi is understood as both a unifying and multiplying principle operating through
the interchange of yin and yang. Ro’s treatment of yin and yang is not conceptual but
symbolic, underlying a holistic approach to reality, surpassing all concepts. Yin and
yang, which reflect the core nature of T’ai-chi is a “cosmic and a dynamic process of
being and becoming.” For further discussion of Yulgok’s idea of T’ai-chi, which
operates within a framework of “one and yet many,” see Young-chan Ro, “Ecological
Implications of Yi Yulgok’s Cosmology,” in Confucianism and Ecology (Cambridge,
Mass: Harvard University Presss, 1998), edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John
Berthrong, pp. 169-186.
nature of the Ultimate *Ki* is, in this sense, both “one and many.” This kind of paradox is pervasive in the mystical traditions of East Asia.

The distinctive feature of the theism of *Hanŭnim* faith can be described as the “multiplization of the monistic *Hanŭnim.*” In other words, the theism of *Hanŭnim* faith, the primordial belief of Korean people, is neither a monotheism, nor a polytheism, with the idea of *Hanŭnim* over and above other gods. Rather, the idea is akin to that of “one and many”: one is many and many are one. The one supreme *Hanŭnim* appears in multiple manifestations. Each of the many, however, is not a fraction of the divine presence, but a full and genuine manifestation of *Hanŭnim* as the Ultimate *Ki*.

There is, however, an important difference from the idea of One in Western tradition (particularly Neo-Platonism), which can be conceived as Being or God behind the veil of appearance. The idea of Oneness in this *Ki*-pneumatology cannot be equated with the first Being or original substance. Rather it is the totality of the Ultimate *Ki*, which creates *yin* and *yang* and initiated the process of creation at the beginning. Of course, the existence of *yin-yang* interchange is inconceivable without the One *Ki*, and the two do not follow or emanate from the One in the Neo-Platonic sense but self-generate in the creative movement of the Ultimate *Ki* toward the cosmic harmony. The Oneness of the Ultimate *Ki* is to represent the totality of reality as a powerful agent of change in which a great multitude of things are integrated into a structured whole of coexistence. The One *Ki* does not represent “a whole” but “many such wholes.”

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25 Choe Dong-hee, “The Understanding of Hawol’s Religious Thought [해월의 종교사상에 대한 이해],” in *Hawol Choe Shi-hyong and Tonghak Thought* [해월
The One Ki is not an immutable identity but a concrete unity of the life-generating process of the Ultimate Ki. All finite appearances of the Ultimate Ki belong together in an all-embracing cosmic Life in which each of its many parts breathe and share the Spirit of life. Thus, it is equally true to say that appearance is reality, as it is to say that reality is appearance. The One is always becoming many and the many are always becoming one. The flow of the Ultimate Ki is here truly “interpenetrating” or “meeting together.”

As the prefix “inter” connotes, Korean panentheism suggests mutual influence, which suggests a symmetrical relation between Hanunim and the world. The structure of existence of the Ultimate Ki is conceptually and metaphorically monistic-multiplicity, in which the ideas of individuality and unity of life are both fully manifested. The Oneness of the Ultimate Ki cannot be described as the “superordinate One” to which the many reduce. In other words, this is not a reduction of a multiple nature of the Ultimate Ki to a unity, but a production of the multiplicity out of a unity. The notion of harmony, in this sense, includes the individuality and multiplicity of the Ultimate Ki. The creativity of the Ultimate Ki unifies “many” through its own creative self-constitution, and this can in fact be descriptive of the grounding of the cosmological and ontological unity.26

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Both Moltmann’s and McFague’s pneumatologies are based in a trinitarian structure, and work in an eschatological manner, awakening hope for the future consummation of the kingdom of God. The category of time is, according to them, related to the unity of the Trinity, for time anticipates the coming Kingdom of God. Although McFague’s understanding of eschatology is closer to a process evolutionary way, her concept of Christian hope for a new creation is congenial with that of Moltmann. In relation to this particular issue, she follows Moltmann’s interpretation of eschatology. She says,

The advent of the coming reign of God in the public ministry of Jesus, his death and resurrection, as well as the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, is the scriptural basis for a substantially different eschatology in the twentieth century of a new creation, the irruption of hope, the critique of the present by the future, are all motifs of the “theology of hope” [Jürgen Moltmann] that is profoundly eschatological and in fact claims that eschatology is the major Christian doctrine.27

For her, the eschatological vision empowers us not only to criticize present socio-economic injustice and to struggle against multiple forms of oppression, but also to envisage a new future. This is the essential element of futurity and hope in the Christian gospel. For Moltmann, a real theological eschatology can only be achieved through the Spirit of Christ and the Christ of Spirit. His doctrine of the divine trinitarian unity

through *perichoresis* is not static but eschatological, in that it is still to be realized in all its genuine fullness. He states,

> The unity of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is then the eschatological question about the consummation of the trinitarian history of God. The unity of the three Persons of this history must consequently be understood as a *communicable* unity and as an *open, inviting, capable of integration*.  

Moltmann speaks of God who relates him/herself with others through the cross and the divine emptiness (*kenosis*) and who is even open him/herself to creation in order to complete the consummated trinitarian relations of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit with all creatures. The gospel is a genuine hope in God. Moltmann also says,

> The whole eschatology of the history of Christ... can also be described as the history of the Spirit, a result of the workings and indwellings of the Spirit through which the future that is hoped for enters into history."  

As the Greek *eschatos* means "aim" "purpose" or "limit (terminus)," the Christian idea of eschatology refers to an *innerhistorical* process which is purposeful and open-ended and to a *transhistorical* consummation of all things in God. In Moltmann's eschatology in particular, God continues to lead us into the ultimate purpose and the fullness of God's Kingdom not only in a chronological sense but also in an ever-present sense. The consummation of the world is a *telos* of world history, which lies beyond the boundary distinguishing history from God. This eschatological vision involves a transition that we can only faintly imagine into the new and unimaginable glory of God's Kingdom. The

28 Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, p. 149.


30 Peter C. Hodgson, *Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology* (Louisville,
transition occurs by the movement of the Spirit according to the final *telos*. The movement of the Spirit works from the past to present or from the present to the future moving only in one direction, towards the consummated future. This eschatological hope in the Spirit of God is the basis of the linear, one-directional, and teleological trajectory of Western culture, which contributes to the development of history and scientific revolution.

While the Holy Spirit is eschatological, the Ultimate *Ki*, by contrast, operates in a cyclical way without a teleological concept. In the philosophy of the Ultimate *Ki*, all forms of life are circular: they begin and return without end. The ideas of beginning and ending are brought together in the work of the Ultimate *Ki*. The crucial point is that the nature of the Ultimate *Ki* creates itself out of its cause. This is, as discussed earlier, the "oneness" or "totality" of the Ultimate *Ki*, which initiates the process of harmony at the beginning. However, the idea of "beginning" here does not indicate a temporal reference but means conceptual priority. It is not appropriate to interpret the notion of "beginning" as a category of time.

The constant and continuous movement of the Ultimate *Ki* ensures the cosmic rhythm and order, which in turn gives rise to the transformation of *yin* and *yang* through the inner process of renewing and recreating. The multitude of the Ultimate *Ki* subsequently occurs in a cyclical and sequential way towards the novel synthesis and harmony. There is no need for the development of a linear concept of time, which identifies a single beginning from which all things are processing.31 In the rhythmic

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31 Chuang Tzu challenges the notion of an absolute beginning. He says, “There is a beginning. There is not yet begun to be a beginning. There not yet begun to not yet
and repetitious movement of the Ultimate Ki, there is no final telos to complete; what remains is the constant process of becoming. The process of the Ultimate Ki, then, is fundamentally cyclical for which no final beginning or end is required.

begin to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is not yet begun to be nonbeing. There is not yet begun to be not yet begin to be nonbeing. Suddenly there being and nonbeing. And yet I don't now what follows from there 'being' nonbeing. Is it 'being' or is it 'nonbeing'?" Chunag Tzu, Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supp. 20. (Peking: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1947), p. 49.
2. Toward a Korean Christian Panentheistic Ki-Pneumatology: Confluence as the Fruit of the Dialogue

In order to suggest a Korean Christian panentheistic Ki-pneumatology as the fruit of the dialogue, some important theological issues need to be discussed in relation to the non-dualistic nature of the Ultimate Ki. How can a new mode of this Ki-pneumatology be a Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit? What theological criteria justify this pneumatology? What are the christological implications of this pneumatology? What are its soteriological and eschatological implications? Since christology has been central to the Christian tradition, the Spirit of Jesus has to be further discussed in the context of Ki-pneumatology. These theological questions cannot be avoided if we are to move toward a credible Korean Christian pneumatology.

2-1. Theological Criteria for Ki-Pneumatology

No single criterion can be considered universal or absolute because of the complexity and diversity of Christian traditions and local cultures. It is impossible to make theological judgements on the basis of the use of a single idea or principle. In particular, in an intercultural context, multiple criteria need to be established which could function more effectively, and yet each of the criteria should display a continuum with recognizable Christian theological positions.32 Theological criteria for Ki-pneumatology as a Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit can be summarized in three points.

First, the idea of "orthopraxis" is one of the essential factors in Christian Ki-pneumatology. This indicates a liberating dimension of the Ultimate Ki. The Bible itself sometimes needs to be read with hermeneutical suspicion, and therefore critically, when certain texts do not function in the service of "life." The Bible constantly insists on practical obedience to the God of justice and compassion. True and authentic life in relation to the divine ruah/pneuma implies commitment to justice, love, freedom, responsibility for the poor, the marginalized, and the earth. The tradition also, at its best, insists that "faith without works is dead" (Jas 2:21). Thus any adequate pneumatology will be assessed according to its relevance and faithfulness to "orthopraxis."

The reason that I attempt to present this particular type of Korean pneumatology is to explore a common context of both East and West, characterized by the serious and urgent problems of the world, rather than merely to affirm that there is a similar metaphysical concept or religious experience. The common context calls for common agenda to promote reflection and organized action for global well-being in the midst of human and ecological suffering. For example, in the past few years, Third World theologians have pointed to the many faces of suffering due to poverty, exploitation, victimization, violence, war, and so on: two-thirds of the world's population cannot meet their most basic human needs. In this century, while some nations have benefited greatly from international trade, the vast majority of the human family has grown poorer. According to statistics, some 1.5 billion people—more than one out of four human beings alive today—are living in "absolute poverty."

Moreover, besides those suffering physically, R. S. Sugirtharajah points out another form of human suffering, that is, mental or spiritual colonialism. He redefines colonialism as "a systematic cultural penetration and domination." He argues that what is most damaging is not historical, political domination, but psychological, intellectual, and cultural colonization. In this respect, any universal claim for the superiority of one particular religion or culture produces religious colonialism. Thus, the "hermeneutical privilege" of the poor, oppressed, and the colonized needs to be taken into account in any attempt to contextualize theology. Pieris' thesis that two urgent issues, "poverty and religious diversity," have to be dealt with together in an Asian context, still remains a fundamental issue.

This criterion of orthopraxis prevents a contextual pneumatology from falling into a kind of "cultural romanticism" in which a cultural identity is in turn absolutized. A Christian orthopraxis has always been prophetic, carrying iconoclastic voices for the minjung, the poor and the oppressed. An understanding of the Spirit which would lead to actions that are not liberating or life-giving could never be considered truly biblical or Christian. Any theology of the Spirit that supports and justifies an oppressive status quo is not a pneumatology of liberation or the Spirit of Life. Nor is it biblical. Jesus says, "you will know them by their fruits (Mt 7:16)"—the fruits of the Spirit should be "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22)." The Ultimate Ki as the cosmic Energy and Spirit, which is operative in the


movement of Tonghak, also has liberating dimensions for both human and ecological communities. This aspect is actualized in relation to the issue of human rights, women's liberation, and challenges oppressive aspects of Korean culture and society.

Secondly, it must be asked whether this pneumatology displays a "cohesiveness with the Bible and Christian tradition." The proposed Ki-pneumatology must be defensible as faithful to the Scripture and must be shown to be in some degree in continuity with Christian tradition. This criterion emphasizes that a new contextual formation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit needs to be recognizably Christian. The biblical message regarding the Holy Spirit has a basic content: The Holy Spirit is the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of life. Accordingly, any understanding of "Spirit" or "spirits" that would run in a contrary direction could not possibly be an appropriate Christian theological expression. The life-giving aspect of the Ultimate Ki is in accordance with many biblical texts, as already indicated in previous chapters; according to the Old Testament, ruah is the life-giving Spirit from which all existence comes. If God withdraws the breath of life, everything disintegrates into dust (Ps 104:29). Also, Job says, if God should take back her Spirit to herself, and gather to herself her breath, all flesh would perish together and human beings would return to dust (Job 34:14). Moreover, the biblical Spirit is within the world. The breath of God's life "fills the world and holds together all things" (Wis 1:7 / Isa 34:16). The New Testament testifies that pneuma is the life-giving Spirit or the breath of life (Lk 1:35 / 1 Cor 15:45 / Jn 3:8; 4:

36 Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis), p. 118.

24; 16:13 / Acts 2:2, etc.). This means that the life-giving Spirit reinforces the connection and cohesion of all existence in the world. All things are mutually interdependent and live with one another.\(^{38}\) Further, we recall from an earlier chapter, that the Spirit is the basis for the Messianic hope of the Old Testament prophets. The ruah will rest upon the expected Messianic being to bring justice and peace to humanity and the whole creation (Is 11:1 / 42:1 / 61:1). This Ultimate Ki, which carries life-giving characteristics and participates in all the affairs of the universe, is deeply congruent with both the Biblical tradition and Korean Tonghak tradition.

Thirdly, a true expression of Christian pneumatology should reflect the Spirit of Jesus Christ. What is the nature of the Spirit of Christ? Particular attention should be given to the testimony of the Scripture that all things are called into being out of God’s living breath. What has come into being in Jesus is life, and the life is the light of all people (Jn 1:4). Jesus says to us, “I am the life” (Jn 14:6). “Life” is the key word in a christological pneumatology. As some Korean minjung and cultural theologians claim, the christological implications of Ki-pneumatology are closely related to the understanding of the life of Jesus.\(^{39}\) What is the life that Jesus brings to the world? What is the life that Jesus shows us through his life, death, and resurrection?

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According to minjung theological perspective, the life of Jesus is the cosmic life, which moves and works dynamically among the life of minjung towards the fullness of God's Reign. As the Scripture testifies, the Spirit of Christ is profoundly soteriological, liberative, carrying a strong advocacy for social change and the liberation of life for the minjung. According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, began his work with a powerful proclamation in the synagogue of Nazareth:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (Lk 4:17-19).

This passage shows that the Spirit of Christ is prophetic, containing a radical protest against corrupt political systems and life-destroying rule. This is the Spirit of soteria for the minjung, who discerns the presence of the Holy Spirit in Jesus. In this sense, Jesus Christ must be an important norm for a Christian Ki-pneumatology. This statement needs to be further discussed in relation to the christological, soteriological, eschatological dimensions of the Spirit of life in minjung perspective. I shall explore in turn implications of a Christian Ki-pneumatology for these important regions of Christian doctrine.

2-2. Christological Implications of Ki-Pneumatology

Today, many contemporary theologians living in both East and West criticize the traditional models of Jesus Christ. They perceive the traditional models as
“ethnocentric, patriarchal, misogynist, anti-Judaic, exclusivist, and triumphalist.”⁴⁰ These models are not responsive to the political, social, ethical, cultural, and sexual issues facing our present globalized world. The traditional images of Jesus have become meaningless, lifeless, and even oppressive to many thoughtful people. Accordingly, it is necessary to devise a christology which is more appropriate to today’s context and today’s pressing problems.

First, we need to remember that Christian traditions on the subject of christology have always been a series of contextual and local theologies relating to particular places and periods of time. For example, Latin American liberation theologians have proposed that the image of Jesus as “liberator” is the most suitable image of Jesus for those struggling against the oppressive socio-political and religious system of the ruling elite. Some black theologians in the U.S. portray Jesus as a “black” for those who still have painful memories of slavery and continue to experience systemic racial discrimination. Some Asian liberation theologians promote the image of Jesus as an Asian sage, wearing a traditional costume meditating in a Taoist or a Buddhist way, leading Asian people to fight against unjust colonial imperialism. These diverse images of Jesus are profoundly biblical in Spirit, since they are closely associated with the core message of Jesus, which is life-giving, life-liberating, and life-sustaining.

Ahn Byung-mu, a minjung New Testament scholar and theologian, points out that one of the most serious christological problems in Korea is the confinement of the saving significance to the “sacrifice-event.”⁴¹ For him, it is highly problematic that Jesus’ life


and death is predominantly interpreted as a ransom from original sin, a notion widespread in the Western Christian tradition. Ahn asserts that sacrifice-centred interpretations of Jesus, which portray God as blood-hungry, are not helpful in the Asian context. Chung Hyun-kyung, a Korean feminist theologian, is also skeptical about the suitability of this Western traditional christology for Korea. She points out that one of the destructive images of Jesus inherited from the Western Christian tradition is "the bloody atonement of the sacrificial lamb." She sees the use of violent images as negative and unfruitful, since the minjung are so threatened by multiple forms of violence today.

Suh Nam-dong presents a fresh minjung christology closely linked to pneumatology. His interpretation of the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10) is very illuminating. In contrast to the traditional interpretation of the parable in which the good Samaritan is identified with Jesus, Suh claims that the pilgrim who was robbed on the road is Jesus. He says, "if anyone... listens to the groaning of the minjung and participates in the struggle of the minjung, he/she already enters into the process of salvation. The reason Jesus comes to the world is to play a role of mourning with the minjung among the minjung." Suh argues, the suffering minjung is Jesus (Messiah) and the minjung is the subject of the history, in which the relationship between Jesus and the minjung is inseparable. Here, it is important to keep in mind that minjung theologians

42 Ibid.
such as Ahn and Suh perceive that the Jesus-event is both historical and symbolic, and therefore becomes paradigmatic\textsuperscript{45} in relation to other \textit{minjung} movements. This does not mean, as Park Jae-soon suggests, that Suh totally abandons the traditional confession of Jesus as the redeemer from human sin and evil. Suh emphasizes, however, the importance of the “recurring Jesus” within the \textit{minjung} movement through the power of the Spirit. Jesus no longer remains a religious object of the past who is worshipped by the \textit{minjung}, but becomes one of the \textit{minjung}, whose life and work is “recurring” in the midst of the \textit{minjung} movement.\textsuperscript{46} The idea of the recurring Jesus is the essence of Christian resurrection from a \textit{minjung} theological point of view. The focus of Jesus’ resurrection is not on the revival or resuscitation of the dead corpse, but on the life-giving and transformative Spirit of the risen Christ. Jesus’ Spirit is not exercised in some remote, other worldly realm but here and now in the midst of \textit{minjung} movements.

Suh claims that the historical Jesus-event, which is a “life-liberating event,” constantly needs to be seen from a pneumatological perspective, in which the Jesus-event is not a “once-and-for-all” event, but continues to “recur” in the context of the \textit{minjung} today. Jesus is not merely a significant figure of the historical past but a “life-liberating event” which happened not just there and then but also happens here and now in the midst of the \textit{minjung} struggle and movement.


How then does the Jesus-event as life-liberating event continue to appear in the history of the minjung? As Ahn argues, it is the power of the life-giving Spirit, which is present and active in the life of the minjung in all places and at all times. As Kim Chi-ha explains, the Ultimate Ki, as the cosmic life of God (Haninim), which is both transcendent and immanent, freely dwells in the life of the minjung. Suh offers a genealogy of the minjung-event observed from a synchronic pneumatological perspective. Although he traces the origin of the minjung movement back to the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms, (since there have been a number of minjung movements in Korean history) here a few representative events are highlighted. Suh presents the Tonghak Peasant Revolution (1892-1894)—an early stage of Ch’ondogyo—as a peak of the Korean minjung movement. As I explained earlier, the Tonghak movement occurred against socio-political oppression and Western colonization and imperialism, teaching that the minjung is “heaven” and the subject of history. Suh argues that the Spirit continued to be at work in the Independence Movement of 1919, led by the minjung, which was the great nationwide demonstration against Japanese colonial rule. The Spirit was also at work in the 19th of April, 1960 Student Revolution against the


49 Suh, “Historical Reference for a Theology of Minjung,” in Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History, p. 169.

military dictatorship, which was inspired by the ideology of democracy. All these minjung movements in Korea have occurred through the solidarity with the spirit of the dead and the will of the living. Suh emphasizes the liberating work of the Spirit in these events. The "here and now" of the Jesus-event as life-liberating event is at the heart of what Christians have always believed about Jesus, who lived, worked, and struggled with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized. Christians have always seen the Jesus-event not simply as a thing of the past, but as a present living reality, and have understood Jesus' presence in the power of the life-giving Spirit. In this pneumatological christology of Suh, the presence of Jesus continues; he is alive and at work in the life-destroying context of Korea today. The past historical figure can continue to live and have meaning and significance in the present. Thus the possibilities of history are not shattered but fulfilled in the power of the life-giving Spirit. This Spirit of Jesus is not among us only to "save our souls from sin," but to inspire and empower social transformation. In this sense, the radical christological statement of minjung theologians—"Jesus is minjung, and the minjung is Jesus"—has important christological implications in Korea, especially if we look at the Jesus-event from a synchronic pneumatological perspective. This pneumatological christology suggests a way of understanding Jesus as a non-personal "minjung-event." Whenever a liberative minjung-event occurs in the work of the life-giving Spirit against the multiple forms of oppression, we encounter the Jesus-event there. Wherever we face minjung-events irrupting against all the "ism oppressions," including the suffering of nature, we are witnessing recurring Jesus-events, resurrection of Jesus, in the power of Spirit, the Spirit of life today.

51 Suh, Ibid., note 34.
This new mode of Korean christology can be described as a *pneumatological, Jesus-as-minjung-centred christology*, leading to a holistic soteriology. This differs from a “Jesus-centred” christology in which the *minjung* is saved by another. As demonstrated above through the study of the Ultimate *Ki*, *Shi Ch'onzju*, and *Yang Ch’ongju* as expressive forms of the Ultimate *Ki*, the characterization of the Ultimate *Ki* as the Spirit of life is a most important and relevant thought for contextualizing a Korean Spirit christology.

The *minjung* pneumatological christology assisted by Suh and supported here is quite different from traditional Western christology. It means that “salvation” comes from within and not only from someone outside ourselves. For Korean panentheistic pneumatology, the divine Spirit is not the presence of the transcendent God above, as emphasized in traditional Christianity, but also the Spirit in whom we all participate. This christology does not emphasize that Jesus has unique ontological status. Rather, the historical Jesus is one of the Spirit-filled *minjung* who fully practices *Shi Ch’onzju* and *Yang Ch’onzju*. The *minjung* who fully bears the Spirit of life for the liberation of the *minjung* is also perceived as “Jesus” in the framework of the Ultimate *Ki*. Thus christology in Korea needs to be interpreted in this pneumatological framework. For pneumatology is more inclusive and broader than christology. Jesus as imported from the West needs to be baptized in the Jordan of Korean spirituality, and born again in Korean *minjung* traditions.
2-3. Soteriological Implications of Ki-Pneumatology

I have already suggested, in the previous section on christology, that certain traditional soteriological concepts are inadequate for Korean theology. Here our expectation of "orthopraxis" comes into play. We have said that a biblical and Christian pneumatology must be "life-giving," i.e. it must bear fruit in justice, love, freedom, and the total well-being of both humanity and nature. Based on this Ki-pneumatology, what kind of positive soteriological implications can be drawn? In what sense can this pneumatology be saving or liberating for both human and ecological communities? In order to respond to this question, it is necessary to look at how Ki-pneumatology is consistent with the actual life of the minjung characterized by the experience of suffering, poverty, political disenfranchisement, economic exploitation, racism, sexism, and other social diseases. What is the "soteriological link" to be emphasized between the Ki-pneumatology and the experience of the suffering people? In order to respond to this question, it is important to recapitulate the core idea of the Ultimate Ki. The Ultimate Ki, which is closely associated with the ideas of "life-giving Spirit," of "transcendent-immanent Spirit," of "cosmic harmony" entails God's own involvement with the world and further reinforces the intimate relationship of God and the world. The transcendent-immanent nature of the Ultimate Ki (like the God/Spirit of the Bible) is fully present in all existences. The holistic aspect of the Ki-pneumatology has direct relevance for the minjung. In other words, Hanomin as the Ultimate Ki, (like the Spirit of Western Christian panentheism) is not to be perceived merely as an abstract remote deity insensitive to the suffering of the minjung, but as an immanent deity keenly responsive to the deepest feelings which grow out of the experience of pain, death, and human agony.
*Hanunim* in the form of the Ultimate *Ki* is affected directly by all of the happenings in the world. Such an intimacy of the Ultimate *Ki* with the world emphasizes God's immanence and, therefore, the relation between the world's suffering and God's suffering. This is a significant soteriological implication of the *Ki*-pneumatology, which points to God's role as a divine energy affecting social change in the world. The multiple forms of systemic suffering and social malfunctioning, which continue to oppress the *minjung*, cannot be ascribed to God as their perpetrator. In this immanence of the Ultimate *Ki*, God and all forms of life become co-partners in the process of life-liberation. Systemic injustice, ecological destitution, social diseases, such as "ism oppressions," which are caused by human greed and self-centeredness, need to be healed by the co-creative activity of God and the world.52

The liberating dimension of the *Ki*-pneumatology is further actualized in relation to the idea of human equality and women's liberation, derived from the doctrine of *Shi Ch'ônju*, (like much of the Christian mystical tradition) based on the life-liberating principle.53 In other words, as mentioned earlier, *Shi Ch'ônju* advocates the importance of human equality by presenting the idea that anyone who *Shi* (waits on or realizes) the Ultimate *Ki* becomes a divine being who shares spiritual affinity with God. The *Tonghak* notion of an essential divinity existing within all human beings was a revolutionary and liberating message for the *minjung*, including women and children, in the Korean society of the nineteenth century. This understanding rejected the traditional classism—which


discriminated among the so-called yangban (the aristocrat) and sangnom (the vulgar), between male and female, and between a legitimate and an illegitimate child.

The ethical idea of equality challenged the value-system of Korean society, including the lowly status of women under strict Confucian ideology, which was practiced in an extremely oppressiver manner. In the social context of Korea, the doctrine of Shi Ch’onju, which emphasizes human equality, became good news for the minjung in their search for liberation from all forms of oppression. This doctrine, that all human beings are considered to embody the Ultimate Ki, regardless of their gender and class, becomes the primary salvific (or liberating) message for the minjung and suffering women. This helps them to search for a solution for their han in Korea by criticizing the oppressive social structure and degrading social caste system. First and foremost, Suun insisted on abolishing the caste system and the social order of the predominance of man over woman. He asserted that all humans were equal and should all be allowed equally to practice the way of the Tao. Suun actually set his two maids free; one became his

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54 I am aware of the fact that, despite the cultural importance of Confucianism as a major East Asian tradition, it has often been rejected and denounced by Asian feminists. The reason for this is that they have various experiences of suffering and stories inherited from their foremothers and mothers, about male-oriented Confucian religious practices. They contend that most of the oppressive customs imposed on women, such as foot-binding, and the conjugal relation of the Five Relationships and so on, come from Confucianism. Thus, “the most oppressive and patriarchal ideology” is the common view of Confucianism taken by Asian feminist theologians. Because of this negative attitude, only the dark side of Confucian practice has been introduced, as if the Confucian tradition is the sole cause or origin of the patriarchal tradition. In my view, Asian feminists need to be wary of this kind of unbalanced (or unfair) criticism. Presenting Confucianism in a distorted way will not only be disturbing to any construction of a holistic Asian feminism, but will allow room for cultural imperialism. In this respect, it is necessary to re-examine the positive and liberating aspects of Confucianism, along with a healthy criticism of the oppressive Confucian practices from a feminist point of view.
adopted daughter and the other his daughter-in-law.\textsuperscript{55} The idea of liberation for life is one of the essential dimensions of a Christian Ki-pneumatology in the life-destroying context of Asia. The Spirit of human liberation is profoundly relevant to today’s world, dominated as it is by white supremacy, capitalist greed, and patriarchy. The negation of discrimination on the basis of gender, class, and age, and the overcoming of rigid social divisions, is an important soteriological fruit of the Ki-pneumatology.

\textit{Minjung Women and the Sex Trade}

It is important that our discussion does not remain at an abstract level. Our theological concepts need to be informed by real experiences of real people, especially in this case, the suffering \textit{minjung} of Korea and Asia generally. One of commonly found examples of the life-destroying reality in Asia is human slavery through the sex industry. This kind of maldevelopment of Asian women is a very complex problem, in which capitalist patriarchalism,\textsuperscript{56} economic neocolonialism, and militarism are all implicated.


\textsuperscript{56} Capitalist patriarchalism is one of the major factors underlying the sex industry and it leads to the idea of the reduction of human beings, particularly women, to property. Zillah Eisenstein explains the relation between patriarchalism and capitalism as follows: “male supremacy, as a system of sexual hierarchy, supplies capitalism... with the necessary system of order and control...[which] is necessary to the smooth functioning of the society and the economic system... Capitalism uses patriarchy, and patriarchy is defined by the needs of capital. At the same time one system uses the other it organizes itself around the needs of the other in order to protect the other. For further discussion, see Zillah Eisenstein, ed., \textit{Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism} (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 27-28. Quoted by Brock and Thistlethwaite, \textit{Casting Stones}, p. 110.
As both Engels and Marx understood, the appropriation of the labor of others is the key to understanding the accumulation of capital, which makes the economic system of capitalism possible. In the case of the sex industry, the minimally paid or unpaid labor of women and children are the sources of an immense amount of capital. Many prostituted women and children are trapped in modern forms of slavery, in the context of capitalist patriarchalism. According to Thanh-Dam, during the last two decades, an alarming number of young women and children have entered into the sex entertainment business, and sex tourism has become a transnational business in Asia involving a great amount of foreign currency. Male government officials in the ASEAN (Associations of Southeast Asian Nations) see prostitution as a “good incentive to induce foreign currency.” The connection between sex tourism and economic development is even clearer in the words of the mayor of a well-known city among foreign tourists on the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand. He said: “we accept prostitution as a part of the development process.” However, the abuse of Asian women’s sexual labor is not merely due to the patriarchal leadership of Asian governments. Asian sex tourism would not be possible without international aid. In fact, the sex industry in Asia was “first

57 For example, in the Philippines, about 100,000 women are employed in the sex related business in Manila; more than 27,000 young girls (between the ages of 5 and 14) register as prostitutes to serve American airmen at the American Clark Air Bases around Olongapo city; in Thailand, from 1974-1980, the number of prostitutes increased almost twofold. For further analysis, see Committee on Long-Term Women Development Planning, “General Condition of Women in Sexual Business,” Report on the Study for Long-term Women Development Planning (1982-2006); A Lin Neumann, “Hospitality Girls in the Philippines,” ISIS International Bulletin 13 (1979), p. 13, quoted by Nantawan B. Lewis, “Uneven Development, Capitalism, and Patriarchy,” in The Power of Naming (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis), edited by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, p. 89.

planned and supported by the World Bank, the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and U.S. AID (Aid for International Development).” Maria Mies, an Indian sociologist, describes this connection as the “International Association of Pimps.” For example, in Thailand, the International Finance Corporation of Thailand offered a fund (about $4 million, between 1960-72) to build the hotels, bars, and night clubs needed to facilitate all kinds of systems for the sex business. This is a consortium of international investors, including the Bank of America Corporation, the Chase Manhattan Corporation, the International Finance Corporation and the Deutsche Bank. Robert McNamara, a head of the World Bank, visited Thailand in 1971 and committed the bank to helping with the continuous development of the tourism business. Cooperation between Thailand and the United States has reinforced the tourism industry, including prostitution, and had an enormous impact on the Thai economy.

In particular, the wages of these women are outrageous. The women usually receive about $5 each for an overnight service. One of the prostitutes in the Philippines who is a single mother with three children says, “If I could get a regular job and make enough money to care for my children, I would quit this work today.” Although most prostitutes lose ninety percent of the money they earn, they still make more money than factory workers, and feel they have no choice but to continue the work of prostitution as a means of survival. However, in the case of younger girls, many are victims of the increasingly widespread practice of trafficking in persons. This is viewed as one of the


most effective methods of maintaining the balance of supply and demand in the sex industry. This kind of human slavery is not a thing of the past but continues in a new form today.

This is one of many examples of the life-destroying reality of the minjung who are powerless, voiceless, and nameless behind the spectacular success of the Asian economy, with the cooperation of capitalist patriarchalism, economic neocolonialism and militarism. Those women are the real people of han and the minjung among the minjung. In this particular Asian context, where a han-ridden minjung exist, the life-giving Spirit is a liberating, healing wind and breath for the suffering people. The Spirit of life can help them to resolve their han and to resist and struggle against gross injustice. In this respect, Ki-pneumatology is concretely related to the underprivileged and the marginalized. The Ultimate Ki as the Spirit of life is grounded in the spiritual movement of han-pu-ri, the releasing and healing of han.

The idea of han can be corrective to traditional concepts of sin, which have not adequately accounted for the suffering of the victim. From the perspective of the traditional concepts, prostitutes should be condemned as sinners in need of repentance and the forgiveness of God. However, from the perspective of han, they are not sinners but victims in need of liberation. The traditional doctrine of sin is one-dimensional, perceiving the reality from the perspective of sinners. For sinners, God’s grace is the primary need, but for victims God’s justice is more urgent and appropriate than the idea of forgiving grace. The focus on forgiveness of sins in this suffering and life-destroying

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61 Han-pu-ri literally means “resolving han,” which is the spiritual and prophetic aspect of the “shaman ethos,” as opposed to the ritual which is the “formal and religious” aspect.
world can be rather deceptive, giving rise to "cheap grace." Cheap grace, according to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, means "grace as a doctrine, a principle, a system" and "the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner." As he points out, cheap grace has been the deadly enemy of the Christian church. Grace or forgiveness without justice is an empty idea, which has often been misused politically by the dominant group of the world. Harold Wells also emphasizes that in the biblical vision, reconciliation is "the result of justice," and, hence, "reconciliation does not replace justice." In this respect, the activity of han-pu-ri, "resolving han," needs to be the presupposition for the doctrine of grace, taking account of the victims of sin and injustice. The authentic steps of han-pu-ri always involve rectification, healing, and forgiveness. The Spirit of han-pu-ri is the foundation for the human soteriological praxis of life-giving Spirit, the praxis of eliminating unjust sufferings from the world.

The Spirit of han-pu-ri, for that reason, does not simply eliminate the dimension of God's grace. Although God's grace cannot be fully grasped epistemologically, the theological idea of grace remains necessary in dealing with the sin and guilt. The Spirit of han-pu-ri is also open to the acknowledgment of one's personal guilt, without merely highlighting moral exhortation. Although the primary focus of the Spirit of han-pu-ri is on the eradication of structural injustice, God's grace as an "empowerment that comes to us from beyond ourselves, a power of unmerited love and acceptance - not a cheap, but a


costly love," is necessary for the holistic salvation of human beings. Thus, this Ki-pneumatology is also a minjung-centred theology. The suffering of the minjung is a central concern in the Christian Ki-pneumatology, as it is in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the minjung.

**The Healing of the Han of Nature**

The soteria of the Spirit of Life is not limited merely to human liberation, but extends to other realms of existence. As the Bible affirms, the original cosmic world created by God’s Spirit is good (Gen 1:2-3). God’s purpose in the creation is for the harmonious co-existence of all God’s creatures (Ps 104:10-23). According to the sabbath laws, as Moltmann points out, God’s righteousness and justice are not confined to human community but embrace the community shared by humanity and the earth. In Leviticus, we find an emphasis on ecological justice: “so that the land may keep its great sabbath to the Lord” (Lev 25:1-7). The sabbath year, the Jubilee, is not just a festival for human beings but the celebration of the whole creation. Also, in the message of Joel, we can see God’s vision of restoration and renewal of the ecological destruction (Joel 2:13; 18-27; 3:16-18). Moreover, the Spirit of God is actively involved not only in the initial act of creation but also in the reproduction of life, in the continual sustaining and renewal of the earth (Ps 104:30). God’s providential care and the presence of God’s Spirit extends to the most insignificant of animals, and the beauty of flowers springing up in the fields of Galilee is greater than that of Solomon in all his glory (Mt 5:6 / 10:29 / Lk 12:24 / 14:6).

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64 Wells, Ibid., pp. 13-14.

As explained earlier, both Moltmann and McFague also affirm that the soteriological dimension of the life-giving Spirit is extended to the entire creation. Moltmann’s *Gestalt* for indicating the Spirit of God is “the configuration or total pattern of the lived life,” permeating all existences. The Spirit of God links the physical natural world with the future historical horizon and interacts between human beings and their environment. He says, “body, soul, and their *Gestalt* can only exist in exchange with other living things in nature and in human society.” McFague emphatically advocates the extension of a Christian soteriological praxis to nature in a “subject-subject relation.” Her ecological model suggests that we human beings should treat the natural world in the same way we treat God and other people as “subjects” rather than “objects.” The environmental degradation and ecological crisis are part of the whole matrix of life, which include socio-economic and religio-cultural dimensions. Since the ecological disaster affects the lives and relationship of persons, communities, and nations, the emphasis on the holistic *soteria* becomes a universal criterion in this life-destroying world. The divine justice of holistic salvation will certainly bring forth “eco-human well-being.” Isaiah proclaims that “when the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, the wilderness will become a fruitful field and the fruitful field will be deemed a forest.


67 Moltmann, Ibid., p. 263.


Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. And the fruit of justice will be peace...” (Isa 32:15-18).

Having stressed the importance of ecological justice today, the panentheistic Ki-pneumatology leads not only to the divinization of humanity but also includes the hope for harmony in all realms of existence in the world. The holistic liberation derived from Shi Ch'ónju and Yang Ch'ónju is extended to the entirety of nature and embraces the whole universe.70

This interpretation is possible in view of the organic aspect of the Ultimate Ki, which is well-demonstrated in Haewol’s thought, in particular, the Samgyóng thought, which suggests the integration and interconnection of heaven, earth, and human beings. This suggests becoming one body with nature through embodying the Ultimate Ki. Becoming one body with the universe means that, since all modalities of existence are made of the cosmic Spirit of life, human beings are part of the divine cosmic process. All beings and things cosmologically share consanguinity with human beings. Therefore, human beings are organically connected with rocks, trees, animals, and so forth, which are no longer conceived of as static objects but as dynamic processes with their own particular configurations of spirit-matter.71 This is related to degrees of spirituality in the entire chain of being: rocks, trees, animals, humans, and gods represent different levels of spirituality based on the varying composition of the Ultimate Ki. Despite the principle of


differentiation, all modalities of being are organically inter-connected, and they are integral parts of a continuous process of transformation. A holistic view of liberation constantly emphasizes the importance of relations between body and spirit, and the interconnectedness of the human community and nature. As such, the Ultimate Ki as the Spirit of life, which penetrates all reality regardless of any divisions, can be understood as the essential energy of the universe. This is the non-anthropocentric nature of the Ki-pneumatology, which becomes again an essential source for contextualizing holistic Christian pneumatology in a Korean way.

2-4. Eschatological Implications of Ki-Pneumatology

If this pneumatology is to be recognizably Christian, the dimension of hope, promise, and eschatology cannot be omitted. However, the concept of "eschatology" needs to be defined anew for this Ki-pneumatology. Eschatology, like other theological themes, is conditioned by particular philosophical and cultural reflections on the nature of time, conceptions of history, and historic interpretations of the biblical expectation. The huge task of a Korean contextual eschatology is of course beyond the scope of this thesis and here we can touch upon it only as it relates to pneumatology.

An eschatological Ki-pneumatology would be enriched by bringing together some aspects of Western Christianity and Korean Tonghak. This would be based on the confluence of the linear and circular concepts of time, which suggests a spiral view of

72 Ibid.

history in which the idea of eternity is experienced in the present moment, and within the forward movement of time. Kosuke Koyama, a Japanese theologian, proposes that the spiral view would be the most suitable way to express an Asian way of perceiving divine presence. He argues that the circular concept of time, which has influenced people's life in Asian culture, needs to be integrated with a biblical view of history, which is closer to linear thinking. For him, a spiral mode would bring the eschatological hope in God closer to the people of Asia.74

The spiral view of eschatology can be interpreted as a modification of the cyclical view, emphasizing its purposeful aspect. The circular concept of time is often understood as static one in which nothing new can happen or be added. In fact, something like this exists in biblical Wisdom literature especially in Ecclesiastes, "...there is nothing new under the sun..." (Eccl 1: 9-10). This tradition asserts a balance, within the biblical faith, to the concept of time and history as moving forward to the fulfillment of God's promise. However, the cyclical concept of time needs to be distinguished from the idea of merely repeating the same time over and over again. The cyclical concept is closer to the idea of an endless circular recurrence of life, in a process of regeneration. Creation is constantly restored and healed in a new kind of time, in a movement of constant renewal. The spiral view includes the circular nature of the Ultimate Ki, which finds its proper place within the ongoing forward moving process of the Ultimate Ki. The concept of time associated with Ki-pneumatology is conceived not as a straight single line forward, but as a spiral which includes cyclical transformation. The cosmic regularity of the Ultimate Ki needs to be placed within the purpose of God for a new and better future. A spiral eschatology

maintains a balance between past, present and future. If traditional Christian eschatology focuses mainly on the future aspect of God’s coming, corresponding to the future redemption of the world, the eschatology of Ki-pneumatology emphasizes God’s coming to be present today, together with hope for what still lies ahead. An unmodified linear view, which understands time as a continuous movement from the past through the present to the future, is no longer tolerable in a Korean context, where the Western idea of “progress” forward, a distortion of the biblical hope in God, has been culturally and ecologically destructive. Moreover, the linear view has been critically assessed in Western Christianity also. For example, Moltmann evaluates the linear concept of time and historical progressivism as an historical catastrophe that contributes to life-destroying culture and human-ecological disaster, ignoring the organic and immanent historical process.75

Suun’s idea of Huch’ôn Kaepyóg (Opening of a New Heaven/後天開闢/후천개벽) has much to offer to a pneumatological eschatology of the Ultimate Ki. His concept of “New Heaven” is not only futuristic but also present. The focus of this idea is, however, on the present as a moment of eternity. The present is not merely a transition from past to future but a moment of eternity.76 Moltmann’s idea of “the present as simultaneity”77 is suitable in describing the nature of Huch’ôn Kaepyóg. The New Heaven, according to Suun, starts in the present, which represents the experience of the


simultaneity of past and future. The idea of eternity is always connected with a process; its being is always in a process of coming to be, passing away, and regenerating. The idea of simultaneity is one of the important attributes of eternity.\(^{78}\)

The significant aspect of eschatology for \(Ki\)-pneumatology is that the New Kingdom of God begins with the present life in this world, liberating the \(minjung\) by following the moral and spiritual principles of the universe. The participation of people is an essential part of creating the New Heaven. A Korean eschatology is brought into connection with the becoming-present of the Ultimate \(Ki\) that breaks through it even here and now. It is also important to note that the idea of the presence of the Kingdom is also found in the New Testament. The Reign of God has already broken into history with the coming of Jesus, so that the Reign of God is “already but not yet.” Jesus says, “in the Spirit of God... the \(Basileia\) has come upon you” (Mt 12:28). The Reign of God is growing here and now (see the parables of the mustard seed and the yeast, Lk 13:18-21). In John, those who believe in Jesus already have eternal life...(Jn 6:54). Hope, therefore, in the New Testament is for the present, because of the here and now presence of the Spirit, as well as future in God’s ultimate consummation of the \(Basileia\).

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78 Moltmann, *The Coming of God*, p. 287. Interestingly, Moltmann, in this book, interprets the idea of eternality with the conception of cyclical time, which symbolizes the time of eternal livingness. He says, “According to ancient ideas aeonic time is conceived of as cyclical, not as a time-pointer or hand. Irreversible historical time is replaced by reversible time, as a reflection of God’s eternity. In the aeonic cycles of time, creaturely life unremittingly regenerates itself from the omnipresent source of life, from God. An analogy is provided by the regenerating cycles of nature, and the rhythms of the body, which already sustain life here. The purposeful time of history is fulfilled in the cyclical movements of life’s eternal joy in the unceasing praise of the omnipresent God. The preferred images for eternal life are therefore dance and music, as ways of describing what is as yet hardly imaginable in this impaired life.” Ibid., p. 289
In the order of New Heaven, for Suun, there are no poor, pagans, outcasts, and strangers. This is also the ultimate vision of Jesus in his message of God’s reign. The idea of hope associated with this understanding could be quite different from that of traditional concepts of linear time. Hope is a present concept for Ki-pneumatology. Kwok Pui-lan says, the eschatological hope for the oppressed is grounded in “their continual struggle and resistance, creating new resources for survival.”

The presence of the Spirit, the Spirit’s dwelling in history, in particular, minjung history, is one of the major themes of Ki-pneumatology. This is the prophetic aspect of Ki-pneumatology, which is concerned with eliminating here and now the multiple forms of systemic oppressions. The prophetic vision of justice and peace is happening in the here and now of human history. The concept of hope in the present is particularly important if we are to avoid the idea of “reward” in the “next world,” as a consolation for the poor and the oppressed. The danger of a merely futuristic eschatology is that it might discourage the oppressed from struggling for their rights and liberation. The eschatological vision of Ki-pneumatology calls for commitment to justice and protection for the minjung, and to the restoration of the original order of creation in nature and cosmos. Nor is the Spirit of life present only in the midst of the minjung, for God is also present in the cosmos—that is, in everything that is the result of the creative action of the life-giving Spirit. But for this panentheistic vision, the reign of God comes both from within and from without. The “next world” is not some other world totally apart from this world, but the transformation of this particular world into a “new heaven and new earth” (Rev 21:1). The eschatology

of Ki-pneumatology is related to the “last thing” and the “first thing,” including the end of the systems of this world and the beginning of the new heaven and new earth. However, the eschatology of Ki-pneumatology does not completely eliminate the futuristic aspect of God’s kingdom, but emphasizes the idea that the “futuristic” or “coming of God’s reign” must happen in this present history. In the words of Moltmann, God gives God’s “future” kingdom “in advance.” There is a continuity and interrelation between the present and future aspects of God’s Kingdom. This is what Jesus means about the presence of God’s reign: “The Kingdom of God is among you” (Lk 17:21). God’s Reign is already happening in this world in the midst of the life-liberating minjung movements, and will be fully consummated beyond time and history, when all creatures and all the han-ridden spirits will be taken up eschatologically.


81 Moltmann, Ibid., p. 198.
We have discussed the unique aspects of a Korean Christian panentheistic *Ki*-pneumatology in which the Ultimate *Ki* is presented as the functional and cosmo-ontological nature of the Spirit of God. Christian *Ki*-pneumatology is the fruit of the dialogue between these Christian and Korean religious traditions. The peculiar feature of this pneumatology is that it is centred on the idea of the “life-giving Spirit.” The important similarity between the two traditions—Christianity and *Tonghak*, in particular—is the comprehensive life principle that animates all forms of life and integrates both physical and spiritual dimensions. This common theme of vitality and creativity found in both Western and Korean panentheistic traditions is an essential component in constructing a Korean Christian panentheistic *Ki*-pneumatology. Both the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate *Ki* are associated with natural and vital forces, as in the blowing of the wind and in the respiration of breath. They are, thus, understood both in relation to the life of human beings as well as to the rest of the world. All life, including human life, is an expression of the Spirit of God. A functional equivalence exists, then, between the idea of the Holy Spirit and the Ultimate *Ki*. *Ki*-pneumatology is also endowed with important life-liberating characteristics for human beings and nature. Hence, in the context of the religious climate of Korea, the Ultimate *Ki*, which is identical with the cosmic life, can be understood as the Holy Spirit. I have argued that this is a Korean Christian panentheistic *Ki*-pneumatology, both biblically faithful and culturally relevant.

The life-giving Spirit as God’s gift to the world lies at the heart of Korean Christian panentheistic *Ki*-pneumatology. The resurrected Spirit of Jesus, who was once
crucified and risen, has continued to "recur" in various life-liberating minjung events in human history. The resurrection experience in this Ki-pneumatology is deeply associated with the idea that the historical Jesus comes alive in the midst of the minjung movements, striving for a new way of being human in this world, when love replaces greed and hatred. The being of Christ is evoked in minjung movements, through which Jesus is no longer simply remembered but is paradigmatically identified with all the life-liberating and life-giving events. The primary emphasis of the resurrected Jesus in this Ki-pneumatology is not, again, upon his body per se, but upon his praxis embodied in his life, ministry, and death. It needs to be stressed time and again that the life-giving Spirit of Ki-pneumatology does not simply indicate any spirit, but specifically means the Spirit of God and of Christ fully embodied in the cosmic life in concrete minjung events towards eco-human emancipation and holistic harmony. In this way, Christians may anticipate the eschatological moment through the struggles of the minjung, based upon that epochal event of Jesus which has already happened in human history. However, this anticipation does not become fully consummated in our history. Rather, it explores the radically new possibilities of the promised future of God's Kingdom. In the completion of the Kingdom of God, all the han-ridden spirits of the dead can be brought back to the fullness of cosmic life. This interpretation of the life-giving Spirit of Ki-pneumatology has been discussed in this thesis in relation to its christological, soteriological, and eschatological implications.

The proposed Korean Christian panentheistic Ki-pneumatology, the syncretistic fruit of the "confluence" of the Christian scriptures and the Korean Tonghak tradition, has some fundamental characteristics of its own. The Ultimate Ki as the Spirit of life is deeply associated with the ideas of spontaneity, harmony, and monistic-multiplicity,
working in a spiral way. These characteristics are non-dualistic, which are more relevant to the religious context of Korea. This aspect of the Ultimate Ki is radically different from the pattern of opposing spirit and matter of the Greco-Roman worldview in which traditional Western Christianity is rooted. Western panentheists (e.g., Moltmann and McFague) have also departed decisively from such a classical theism. Both Western and Korean panentheistic pneumatologies affirm that the classical understanding of the Spirit, which is mainly signified as the third of three persons or hypostases linking the Father and the Son of a transcendent, monotheistic deity, is no longer tenable.

A new mode of Korean Christian panentheistic Ki-pneumatology can be called a “Life-centred Ultimate Ki-pneumatology.” This carries meaning coherent with the biblical words ruah and pneuma, combined with contemporary sentiments for the liberative in theology. This Christian Ki-pneumatology, combining the transcendent and personal Hanunim (God) and the immanent natural ki, also provides a useful conceptual framework to understand the Spirit of God in a Korean way. Hanunim as the Ultimate Ki is a way of talking about God in active relation to humanity, especially the minjung. Needless to say, the issue of liberation in theology needs to be contextually construed.

Compared to other religious traditions in Korea, Christianity, which has been in Korea for only two hundred years, remains a young and foreign religion in the Korean culture. This relatively young religion has not only failed to be fully interculturated into Korean cultural soils, but has also led to enormous, negative religio-cultural conflict among Korean religions. Christianity in Korea has been a monologue all along. The exclusive claim that Christianity is the only way of salvation has been transplanted into many other countries by Western evangelical missionaries, along with political expansion.
The term "Three M's (Mission, Merchants, and Military)"\(^1\) is used to describe the activity of Western expansion in Korea. Accordingly, up to the present time, Western missionary activities have been severely criticized as a major cause of cultural oppression. The imperialistic style of the Christian mission in Korea, as well as in other Asian countries, repudiated all possibility of opening a mutual dialogue with indigenous religious traditions. As a result, Korean Christianity has remained almost exclusively Western in theology, and schizophrenic in spirituality. The solus Christus-theology has claimed that the Spirit of Christianity is the only "Holy" Spirit and the Spirit of salvation, demonizing the indigenous spiritual worlds of Korea. The obvious legacy of this missionary attitude is faithfully continued today in a great number of Korean evangelical churches which send their own missionaries abroad. These zealous missionaries devote their lives to convert people of other faiths to the same exclusive Christianity. Korean Christianity today is caught up in this universalizing syndrome. Such an oppression and the dualistic theological framework are clearly operative in the adoption of the term Sŏngryŏng (성령/聖靈), which, as a literal translation of "Holy Spirit," is a culturally alienating idea. It demonstrates that the initial stage of Korean Christianity did not go through the proper process of cultural contextualization. Prior to the introduction of Christianity in Korea, there was no comparable term to that of "Holy Spirit," with its inherent dualistic assumption of separation from all of other spirits.

The relationality of Ki-pneumatology empowers the unity of spirit and body, the divine and the secular, individual and society, creator and creature. The cosmic Spirit of

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\(^1\) For further discussion of the relation between colonialism and Western mission, see Stephen Kim, "Seeking Home in North America: Colonialism in Asia; Confrontation in North America," in People on the Way (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), edited by David Ng, pp. 1-24.
life re-connects all dichotomizing ideas, separating realities into various hierarchical levels. This understanding of the Spirit promotes the idea that true perfection consists not in excluding others but including them. God (Hanunim) includes the world and the world includes God. God perfects the world and the world perfects God. God as the Spirit embodies the principle of internal relation in which God's life is intimately interconnected with other beings. The full immanence of God is her/his correlative response to the joys and sufferings of the world. This interrelation of God and the world is strengthened in the holistic interpretation of the Spirit of life. Moreover, this view entails a "symmetrical relation" of God and the world, rejecting the idea of theological determinism, which sets a higher value on God's immutability and self-subsistence. This embodiment of Christian Ki-pneumatology enhances the integrity both of God and of the world, and shifts the paradigm of pneumatology from anthropocentrism to cosmic-life-centrism.

In this context of thought, the Korean term Holy Spirit, Sŏngryŏng, can be interpreted as Sanggi, the life-giving Spirit. The very nature of life-giving Spirit is purposeful and always generated anew, while struggling against any form of oppression and striving for the balance and harmony of the whole. Therefore, understanding the Ultimate Ki, the life-giving Spirit, as the Holy Spirit in Korea is not only culturally appropriate, but also ecumenically relevant, considering the global concern for ecological justice in theology. The life-giving Spirit permeates and activates all the processes of creaturely life and leads them beyond themselves in a process of progressive spiritualization. This life-centred Ultimate Ki-pneumatology provides the climate for understanding God as the presence of the Spirit without alienating the diverse indigenous spiritual world of Korea. This pneumatology promotes a self-creating and self-referential
Spirit, relating her/himself to its own future, a future of its own transformation toward the coming of God's Kingdom.

These holistic and life-centred characteristics of a Korean Ki-pneumatology are particularly important and relevant to today's life-destroying world, marked by the massive poverty of the Third World, eco-cide, and other "ism oppressions." Also, this organic view of the life-giving Spirit becomes a corrective to the dualistic worldview and further suggests an integration of both the spiritual and physical dimensions of reality. This provides the context for the Spirit of liberation, the transformation of every dimension of life in its socio-political, cultural, and environmental aspects.
Glossary

Chaggi, 雜氣: energy of speaking manner
Chigi, 杂気, 总: The Ultimate Energy or Spirit-Matter.
Ch'igong, 气功: techniques for absorbing and keeping ki within the human body
Ching, 正, 精: vital essence
Ch'önju, 顔主, 天主: God
Chohwa 조화: Harmony

Hao Jan Chih Ch'i, 浩然之氣: immensely great and strong energy or spirit
Hamunim, 나문임: Korean word for “God”
Hanga Solwi, 화아설위: 向我說位: rituals towards oneself
Haengi 行氣: movement of energy or spirit-matter
Haewol, 허월: Honorary name of Choe Shi-hyong (1827-1898), the second leader of Tonghak
Heulgi, 行気, 血氣: energy of one’s temper
Honwón ji Ilgi, 逢元之日吉, 混元之一氣: the primordial one Ki or one Ki of chaos

Kapgolmun, 갑골문, 甲骨文: Oracle bone, Chinese pictography inscribed on the bone of animals
Kiu, 기우, 氣雨: praying Sangje to send rain
Kihwa Chisin, 기화진신, 氣化之神/ Kihwa Sinrong 기화신령, 氣化神仙: God or the Ultimate Ki in process
Kunggung, 공궁, 号宮: ambivalent, curved, bow-like figure
Kwisin 귀신, 鬼神: ghost-spirits
Kimmun, 금문, 金文: golden text
Kunja, 군자, 君子: Confucian ideal of the human being
Mansin, 漢神, 萬神: Thousands of gods
Muwui Ihwa, 무위이화, 無為以化: working through non-action or the way of spontaneity

Neidan, 내단, 內丹: internal alchemy
Osim juk Yosim, 見心欲思念, 吾心即如心: union between God and the world
Puryon Kiyon, 불연기연, 不然基然: paradoxical concept of the causality of the Ultimate Ki: it is a suchness and not a suchness
Sain Yöch'on, 사인여천, 使人如天: treating humans as Heaven
Samgyöng, 상경, 三經: three kinds of reverence—reverence for Heaven, human beings, and objects
Sangje, 상제, 上帝: Lord-on-High
Shen, 神, 精: spirits
Shi Ch'önju, 시천주, 侍天主: waiting on God
Siggi, 식기, 食氣: energy of having food
Sölmun Haeja, 설문해자, 說文解字: The Oldest systematic Chinese text written in 100 B.C.E.
Sônaô, 詩隅, 仙語: mysterious words of Taoism
Sônyak, 詩약, 仙藥: mysterious medicine
Suun, 수운, 水雲: the pseudonym of Choe Je-u (1824-1864), the founder of Tonghak
Susim Chônggi, 수심정기, 修心精氣: cultivation of one's mind and energy or ki
T'ai-chi Tu, 太極圖: Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate of Chou Tun-i
T'ai-chi, 太極: Ultimate Reality
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