

Academic Presentation

Return-based (Hoegwi) social-contractarian view of distribution and Sinin Johwa (**神人調和)** —————

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Table of Contents

1 Pro

2 The limitations of social contractarianism

3 Wh

4 A cyclic (return-based) structure of distribution

5 Ac

6 Interaction among ideologies

7 The distrib

8 Conclusion and Implications

Problem awareness: the limitations of social contractarianism

The existing social-contractarian view of distribution, inclined toward deontology and defeatism, faces limits in realizing social justice.

- **The problem of reward for effort**

The crux of social contractarianism comes down to the question of whether one can be rewarded with the due compensation for one's effort.
- **The emergence of ethical impotence**

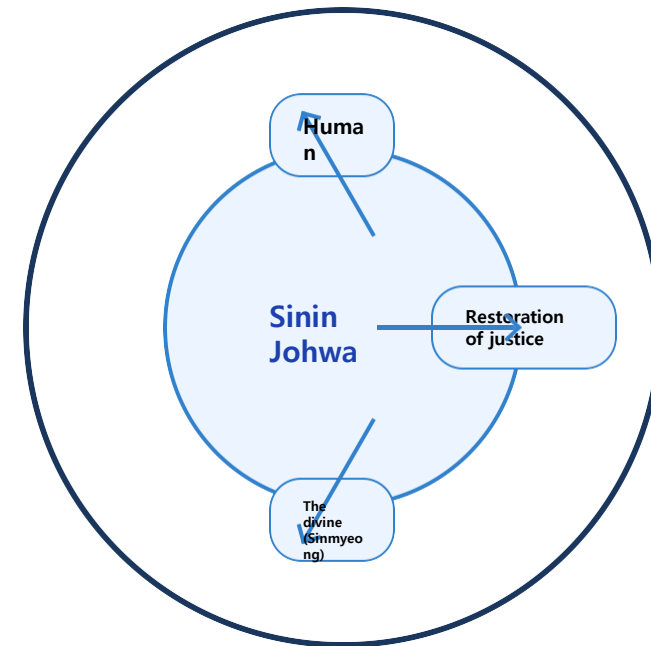
The turn of ethics toward defeatism through excessive deference to duty makes the substantive realization of justice difficult.
- **The weakening of social solidarity**

An individual-rights-centered structure weakens the sense of solidarity and mutual responsibility within the community.

Theoretical background: Sinin Johwa (神人調和)

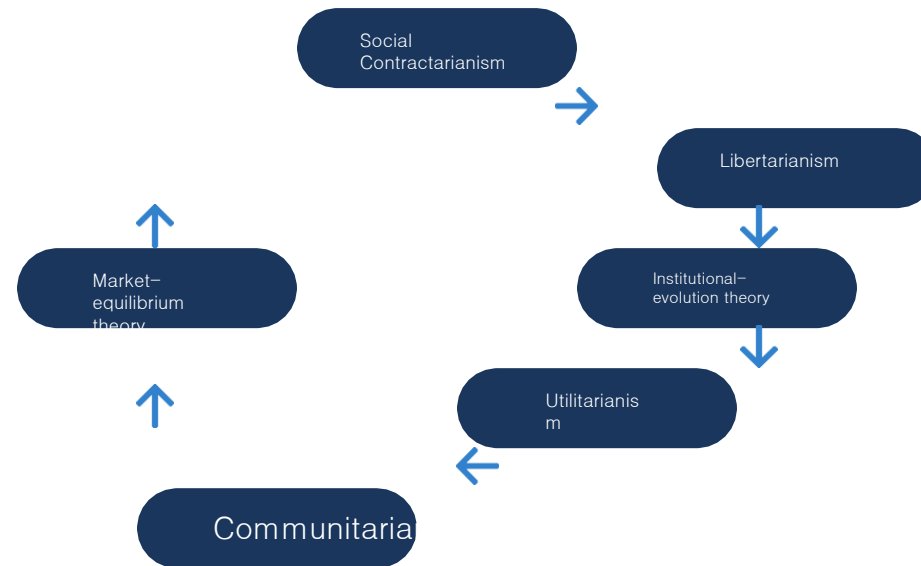
Sinin Johwa (神人調和) denotes a cyclic structure in which humans and the divine act on each other in a return-based manner and achieve harmony.

- **Transcendent sanction and harmony**
The divine (神明) performs a transcendent sanctioning function against breaches of contract, damage to justice, and the like.
- **The foundation for realizing justice**
It provides a new normative foundation for realizing justice in human society.
- **A cyclic feedback system**
It forms a cyclic feedback system of human action—consequence—divine intervention—restoration of harmony.



The cyclic (return-based) structure of social contractarianism

In return-based social contractarianism, diverse ideologies and currents of thought are cyclically integrated to find the point of balance for realizing distributive justice.



- **A mutually complementary cyclic structure**

Each ideology overcomes its independent limitations and exchanges feedback with the others, developing distributive justice expansively.

- **The working of Sinin Johwa**

Justice is restored in the process by which the divine (神明) serves as a mediator to achieve balance and harmony among the ideologies.

Actual cases from the Jeongyeong

The Jeongyeong shows, through various cases, how the principle of Sinin Johwa operates in real life.



Breach of contract and sanction by the divine

"If one breaks a promise, one is punished by the divine..." — Gyobeop ch.1, v.29



The feedback mechanism by a transcendent being operates when a social promise or contract is violated

The establishment of justice and community cohesion



"Being governed without grievance, people came to be in harmony with one another" — Gwonji ch.1, v.11

Strengthening the community through active response to injustice and the restoration of social justice

The restoration of ethical practice

"The Three Bonds and Five Relations, the sincerity-reverence-faith of the Doctrine of the Mean, and the no-self-deception (mujagi) of the Great Learning..."

Interaction among ideologies and the overcoming of limitations

The dispersed limitations of the three ideologies—libertarianism, utilitarianism, and communitarianism—are overcome by integrating them into a return-based, cyclic social-contract structure.

Distribution problems by ideology and the Sinin-Johwa response		
Ideology	Core problem	Sinin-Johwa response
Libertarianism	Absolutization of individual property rights; imbalanced distribution	Sanction by the divine against economic injustice; promotion of redistribution
Social Contractarianism	A defeatist ethical outlook; neglect of breach of contract	Realizing justice through divine intervention; promoting substantive distribution
Utilitarianism	Ambiguity of the greatest-happiness principle; the difficulty of measuring utility	Enhancing communal utility through Sinin-Johwa feedback
Communitarianism	Subjectivity in interpreting the common good; internal conflict	Strengthening community cohesion grounded in transcendent value

- **Characteristics of the cyclic structure**

The weakness of each ideology is complemented by the strength of another, and Sinin Johwa acts as a feedback mechanism for realizing justice.

- **The feasibility of realizing substantive social justice**

Conclusion and Implications

We have confirmed that the practice of ethics and morality, together with the cyclic structure of Sinin Johwa, is central to the restoration of social justice and distributive justice.

- **The practical value of Daesoon Thought**

"The creed and purpose of Daesoon lie in the Three Bonds and Five Relations, the sincerity-reverence-faith of the Doctrine of the Mean, and the no-self-deception (mujagi) of the Great Learning."

- **The restoration of ethical practice**

Establishing a divine-centered ethical feedback structure that values justice and the constant Way (常道)

- **Implications for contemporary philosophy of distribution**

Presenting a paradigm of distributive justice that overcomes the limitations of existing ideologies in a return-based, cyclic manner

- **Directions for institutional improvement**

The need to reform the basic structure of social institutions so as to strengthen ethical responsibility and mutual solidarity

"Establishing a return-based economic view through Sinin Johwa can become a new paradigm for the restoration of social justice."
