



Dotong Jingyeong and Overcoming the Environmental Crisis

An Academic Inquiry into Measures for Overcoming the Environmental Crisis through the Flow-
Oriented (Yuhaeng) Communitarianism of Daesoon Thought

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The Background of the Environmental Crisis

 Image of the environmental crisis



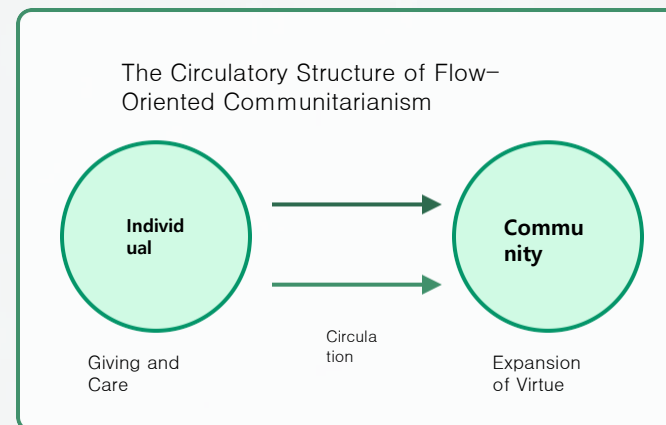
- Today humanity faces a serious environmental crisis, which has emerged as an unforeseen consequence of continuous economic development.
- Western communitarianism originally aimed at improving the economic environment and realizing community, but its lack of a cyclic perspective brought about the environmental crisis.
- The Western capitalist system succeeded in material development but, lacking care for the natural environment, ultimately led to environmental destruction.
- The human community came to enjoy economic abundance but simultaneously found itself in the contradictory situation of facing the crisis of the community's extinction.
- Contemporary society, having failed to find an effective response to the environmental crisis, lives out today without any conviction about a sustainable future.

The Concept of the Flow-Oriented Communitarianism (Yuhaeng) of Daesoon Thought

 Image of circulation and harmony



- Flow-oriented (Yuhaeng, 流行) communitarianism is a core concept of Daesoon Thought that values the principle of economic circulation and pursues a balance between community and individual.
- In Daesoon Thought, goods are a result of circulation, so as long as circulation is not obstructed, the desire to give to the community and to give goods is strongly emphasized.
- It recognizes a philanthropic view of goods in which, prioritizing the community's justice along with the community's interest, one uses personal property for communal ends.
- Unlike Western communitarianism, the Daesoon view of goods is—so long as circulation is presupposed—more flow-oriented and pursues harmony with the natural environment.



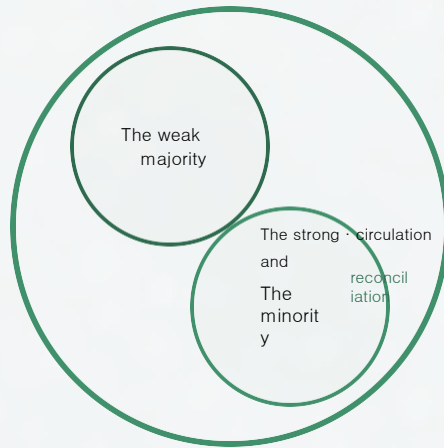
The Problems of Western Communitarianism

 Image of imbalance



- Western communitarianism, due to its lack of cyclicity, failed to achieve economic balance and accelerated the environmental crisis.
- By overemphasizing the excellence of the community, it produced a structural problem of ignoring the value of the individual, which is the foundation of the public good.
- Although it contributed to improving the economic environment, its lack of a cyclic perspective led it to focus only on material development rather than harmony with the natural environment.
- The communitarian approach, which denies market-internal excellence and uses political alternatives as a pretext, instead impoverished the economic environment.
- **By overlooking its relationship with the environment under the pretext of serving the community alone, humanity came to face an ecological crisis even amid economic abundance.**

Dotong Jingyeong: Presenting a New Alternative



- Dotong Jingyeong denotes a circulation in which two or more systems act upon each other in a flow-oriented manner, aiming at a world where the strong and the weak are reconciled.
- Unlike utilitarianism, which prioritizes the choice of the powerful minority, Dotong Jingyeong values an ethics of care for the weak majority.
- Unlike conventional communitarianism, flow-oriented communitarianism satisfies both sides' demands at once and pursues harmony with the natural environment.
- To overcome the environmental crisis, it restores the principle of cyclicity and forms a structure in which the agents of economic activity mutually care for one another.
- Dotong Jingyeong, as a new paradigm that secures the sustainability of the human community, presents an alternative ideational system for overcoming the environmental crisis.



Case Analysis



- **Voluntary Giving and Example-Setting:** By selling his property and setting the example of distributing it to beggars, Sangje led Iljinhoe members to cease their plundering and to act for the community with their own property.

“I will make them stop the plundering and harm to the people like that of the Gabo year, and have each of them use their own property. I must first set the example.” — Jeongyeong, Gyoung Ch. 1, v. 15

- **Restoring Communal Relationships:** Through the case of Sin Gyeong-hyeon, discord within the community was turned into reconciliation, showing that right and wrong lie in one's actions, not in one's position.

“In all matters, right and wrong lie in me, not in one's position; hereafter, think carefully about everything before acting.” — Jeongyeong, Gyobeop Ch. 3, v. 18

- **The Flow-Oriented Nature of Words and Deeds:** Explaining the principle that one's own words and deeds circulate and return to oneself.

“What we seek to remove as evil is all but weeds; what we take and look upon favorably is all flowers (惡將除去無非草 好取看來總是花). Words are the cry of the mind, and deeds are the traces of the mind. To speak well of others becomes virtue and... returns to my own body.” — Jeongyeong, Gyobeop Ch. 1, v. 11



Conclusion and Implications



- The flow-oriented communitarianism of Daesoon Thought, as an alternative thought that overcomes the limits of Western communitarianism, can contribute to solving the environmental crisis.
- Dotong Jingyeong aims at the reconciliation of the weak majority and the strong minority, presenting a direction for fundamentally solving environmental problems through the community's cyclic structure.
- To solve the environmental crisis brought about by Western communitarianism, a cyclic view of goods and an economic view grounded in flow (Yuhaeng) are needed.
- Daesoon Thought, which emphasizes the giving and circulation of goods, provides an ethical foundation that goes beyond individual selfishness and ecological destruction in contemporary capitalist society.
- As future tasks, measures for the contemporary application of Dotong Jingyeong and the development of a community model responding to the global environmental crisis are needed, through which an alternative for a sustainable future can be presented.