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Neo-Confucian Principle(s) in the Thought of Sun Myung Moon

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True to its original setting in Korea, the Unification thought of Rev. Sun Myung Moon (文鮮明) manifests deep connections with Confucian and especially Neo-Confucian patterns of thinking.^[1] My purpose in this article is to trace some of these connections and resonances, both explicit and implicit, that can be discerned in the main contours of his thought. Exploring the family resemblance between Neo-Confucian^[2] thought and Unification thought may shed some intriguing light in both directions.

In pointing out the connections between Rev. Moon's thought and Neo-Confucianism, I am not implying that his thought has been derived from Neo-Confucian sources; clearly there is much more in his teaching than was ever envisioned in Neo-Confucian thought. However, just as the categories of Greek philosophical thought have been used extensively in the historical development of Christian theologies, so Neo-Confucian thought has provided some core conceptual patterns for the development of Unification theology. A modern-day Aristotelian or neo-Platonist might object that Plato and Aristotle did not, and would not, affirm the resulting concepts of God, and Christian theologians would never agree that their theology is simply derived from ancient Greece. Yet it is coherent to classify Christian theologies as leaning more toward Aristotle or more toward Plato, and it is important to acknowledge that these theologies are also part of the legacy of Greek thought. So here also, although objections could be raised that Confucius or Zhou Dunyi^[3] would not accept the results of Rev. Moon's theological use of their ideas—and no Unificationist would agree that their theology is simply an extension of Confucianism—that does not negate the coherence of pointing out the pedigree of some of those ideas.

In his recently published autobiography, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, Rev. Moon recounts his early childhood in an environment where fervent Christian revivalism was spreading in a society deeply imbued with Confucian patterns of life and thought.^[4] The early chapters of the book are also full of the adventures of a ferociously curious young boy growing up in rural northern Korea. Rev. Moon describes his early schooling as follows:

When I turned ten, my father had me attend a traditional school in our village, where an old man taught Chinese classics... At school, we read the *Analects* of Confucius and the works of Mencius, and we were taught Chinese characters. I excelled at writing, and by the time I was twelve the schoolmaster had me making the model characters that other students would learn from.^[5]

Through this education he developed a life-long love of Chinese characters, and would delight in expounding new insights from the form of the characters.

From his account of his education, it is clear that young Rev. Moon was quite ready to move on from Confucian classics to more modern topics. He writes, "Actually, I wanted to attend a formal school, not the traditional village school. I felt I shouldn't be just memorizing Confucius and Mencius when others were building airplanes."^[6] Through his determined efforts, he was able to transfer into one of the Japanese-based public schools and eventually trained in Japan in the field of electrical engineering. Yet later, he came to use models of electricity in order to explain the

common ground of Heaven and humanity, the Confucian and Neo-Confucian virtue *ren* (仁), often translated human-kindness or benevolence.[7]

In this exploration, I will begin with *li* (理) as an evident theme, along with “Original Principle” (原理, *wolli*), usually translated “Divine Principle.” The next section picks up on a textual reference in *Exposition of the Divine Principle* to the “Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate” (太極圖說) by Zhou Dunyi to sketch the role of diagrams in expressing “Original Principle.” This is followed by an exploration of the dynamics of Unmanifest and Manifest in Unification ideas of the divine, leading to a section on “sincerity” or “authenticity” (誠), a theme that has deep resonance with the Confucian classic *Doctrine of the Mean* in connection with Heart-motivation. The final section returns to the theme of *li* and suggests ways that current Unification spiritual practice can benefit from awareness of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation.

Li as an Explicit Theme

The most widely used source for the teachings of Sun Myung Moon is *Wolli Kangron* (原理 講論), which was organized and synthesized by his close disciple Hyo Won Yu and translated into English as *Divine Principle* or more recently, *Exposition of the Divine Principle*. [8] The phrase “Divine Principle” or “The Principle” is used in ordinary parlance among Rev. Moon’s followers as a shorthand for his teachings, particularly insofar as those teachings are understood to be revelatory.

In Unification thought, as in Neo-Confucian thought, *li* signifies the inherent principles of the natural world as well as the human ability to understand those principles (intelligibility). [9] For Neo-Confucian thought, *li* (both singular and plural) is/are fundamentally immanent in the world of experience, rather than being primarily conceptual or explicitly stateable in words. *Li* as the principle in and of all things is not reducible to words or formulas. Recalling this Neo-Confucian insight on the nature of *li* can be beneficial to the development of Unification understandings of the Original Principle, so that it may be possible to avoid the kind of disputations over verbal formulas that have plagued the history of Christianity in the west. Exploring the Neo-Confucian background to the concept of *li* is helpful in recognizing that “the Principle” is not fundamentally a book, but rather the book is an account of the Principle. The Principle ought to be understood as inherent in things, even if it has taken a messianic figure to discern it.

Li further includes the touchstone of ethical reflection and personal cultivation. In terms of moral psychology, “Original Principle” (原理, *wolli*) in Unification thought is cognate with and comparable to the “Heavenly Principle” (天理, *cheolli*, Chinese: *tianli*) that the Neo-Confucians claim to have discovered at the root of both ontology and moral psychology. [10] The Neo-Confucians posit a stark dichotomy and opposition between this Heavenly Principle and selfish human desires (天理 vs. 人欲) vying for our attention. Corresponding to the interfering pull of human desires, Unification theology has an elaborate account of “fallen nature” and the origin of evil that draws heavily on biblical sources.

Within the community of his followers, one of the attractions of Rev. Moon’s thought has been that it is perceived to offer a principled—that is, logically patterned—explanation of biblical texts. For many first-generation members of the Unification community, the entry point of their conversion was their sense that the Original Principle offers a coherent explanation of the biblical records that accounts for particularly difficult passages. Those puzzling texts came to make sense in a new way that had direct consequences for their own lives. In other words, they perceived that the principles or patterns of the transmitted scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were extracted and clarified in a new, revelatory way in the expositions of the Original Principle. I propose that Confucian and Neo-Confucian texts can be fruitfully juxtaposed with Unification teaching in the same way.

Unification theology also applies *li* to the discernment of a teleological pattern in history. The history chapters of *Exposition of the Divine Principle* develop a paradigmatic historiography, mapping principles extracted from biblical narratives to later events and persons. This mapping is comparable to Confucian “praise and blame” historiography, but goes further to claim

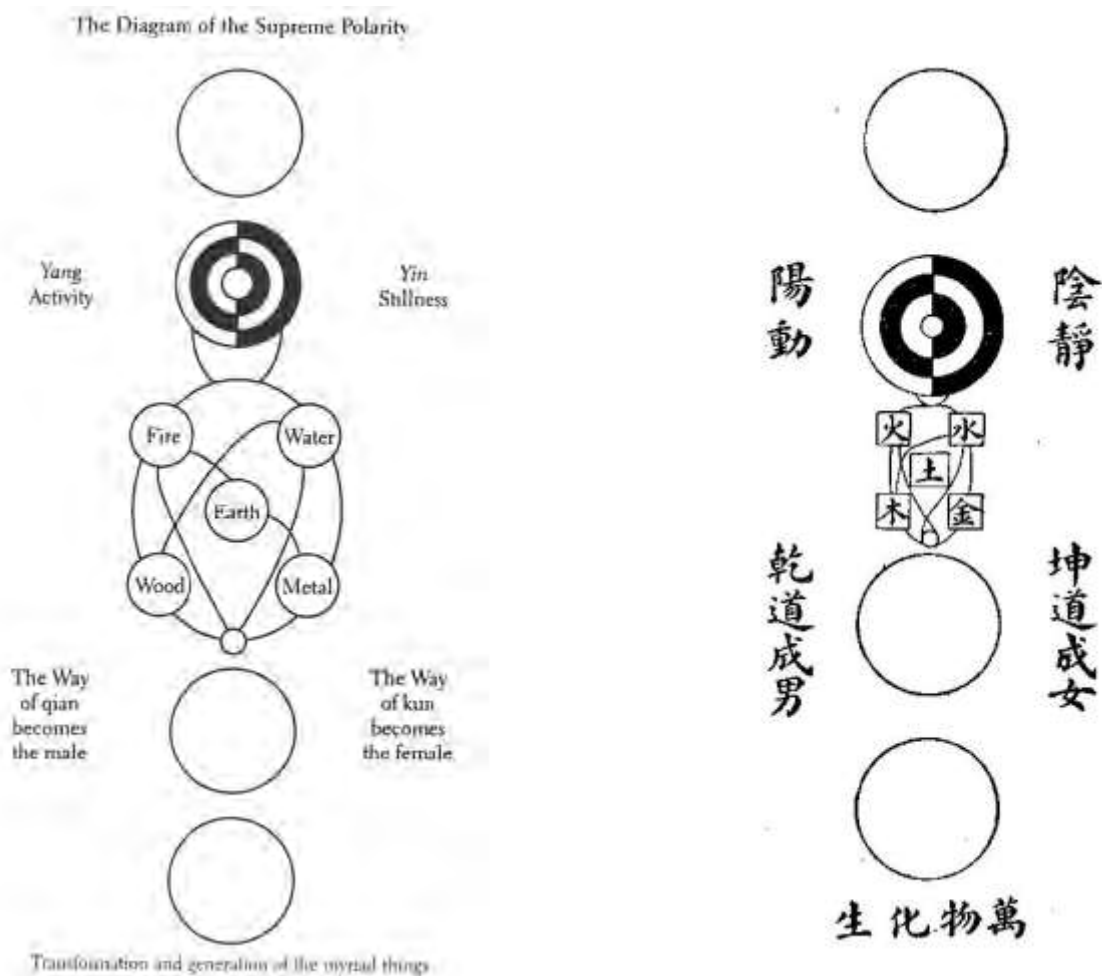
predictive power. Indeed, the discernment of teleological patterns in history has become convincing evidence for many Unificationists that our time is the time for significant change in the world order.

Diagramming the Cosmos

The first major section of Exposition of the Divine Principle is “The Principle of Creation” (創造原理). This section builds up a basic theory of how the characteristic patterns of the myriad things (萬物, *manmul*, also translated “all things”) manifest the character of their Source or Creator. In the course of this explication, there is a key reference to Confucian and Neo-Confucian sources. The text mentions the *Yijing* (I Ching, Book of Change) as the basis of East Asian philosophy and continues:

There, the origin of the universe is the Great Ultimate (Ultimate Void). From the Great Ultimate arose yang and yin, and from yang and yin came forth the Five Agents—metal, wood, water, fire and earth—and from the Five Agents all things came into existence.^[11]

A note at this point says, “This is a paraphrase of the opening lines of *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate (T'ai-chi-t'u shuo)* by Chou Tun-i.”^[12] This explicit reference to Zhou Dunyi’s *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* in the main text of Divine Principle invites consideration of the Diagram itself (shown in both original and translated versions):

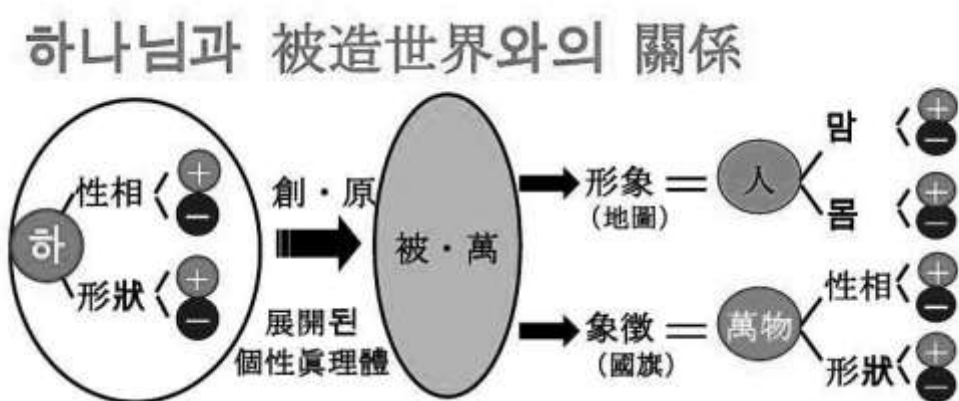


As is clear from the *Diagram* itself, one of its main features is to trace the interaction of yang and yin in the unfolding of the cosmos. The *Diagram* demonstrates a principle that is found throughout the myriad things (*manmul*), namely the polarity of yin and yang. *The Exposition of Divine Principle* text specifically lauds this aspect of the Diagram.

On the other hand, the *Divine Principle* text goes on to argue that the cosmological system of the *Diagram* is inadequate or incomplete without the additional insight that the Rev. Moon’s teaching provides:

However, this East Asian metaphysics observes the universe exclusively from the viewpoint of yang and yin while failing to recognize that all things also possess internal nature and external form. Therefore, although it reveals that the Great Ultimate is the subject partner of harmonious yang and yin, it fails to show that the Great Ultimate is also the subject partner of harmonious original internal nature and original external form. Hence it does not comprehend that the Great Ultimate is a God with personality.^[13]

As this passage indicates, the corrective enhancement proposed by the *Divine Principle* text is another set of “dual characteristics,” namely “internal nature” (性相) and “external form” (形狀). As expressed in the “Original Substance of Divine Principle” (OSDP) lecture series slides, the resulting chart looks like this (displayed horizontally):



In this Divine Principle diagram, the divine Source or Origin is at the left, represented by an abbreviation for the traditional Korean term *Hananim* (하나님)—literally “The One,” often translated “God.” *Hananim* is then characterized by both internal character and external form, with both characteristics in turn having both yang and yin aspects (represented by + and – in the diagram, respectively). Through the Principle of Creation (創造原理) and the process of developmental becoming, the myriad things or beings unfold into existence as “individual embodiments of truth” (個性真理體).

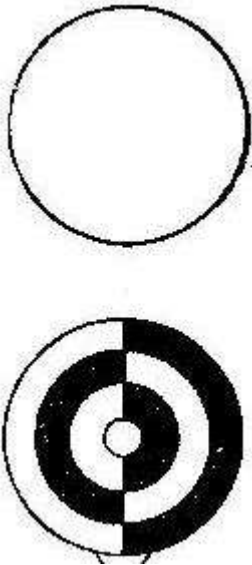
These embodiments appear in two forms, as “image” (形象), somewhat the way a map is an image of territory, namely human beings, and as “symbols” (象徵), somewhat the way a flag symbolizes a territory, namely all others among the myriad things. In a way, this distinction of humans as “image” from all others among the myriad things as “symbol” corresponds to the comment by Zhou Dunyi in the *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* that “only human beings receive the two *qi* (氣, vital energies of yang and yin) in their highest excellence, and therefore humans are the most intelligent (靈, spiritually efficacious).”

Like their Source, both humans and all other things are characterized by the dual characteristics of “internal character” and “external form”. In the human case, the OSDP diagram above makes use of the traditional Korean paired terms 마음 *maum* (mind/heart) and 몸 *moem* (body). Each of these, in turn, possesses the dual characteristics of yang and yin, positivity and negativity in an “electrical” sense.

Reading the OSDP diagram from the myriad things back toward the left (or top), the Divine Source (*Hananim*) can be characterized by both “original masculinity” and “original femininity.” As Rev. Moon put it in an oft-quoted discourse titled “In Search of the Origin of the Universe” (August 1, 1996), “If we go deeper and deeper in our search for the origin of the universe, we arrive at God. We come to know that God possesses dual characteristics of male and female.” Though Unification piety often continues to use the male-language for God inherited from the Christian tradition, there seems to be little justification for that in the Principle diagrams themselves. Indeed, at the Coronation of God ceremony, which Rev. and Mrs. Moon held in 2001, God was represented by a dual throne. Moreover, Mrs. Hak Ja Han Moon, who is now

leading the Unification movement in Rev. Moon's stead, recently directed that the traditional Korean language of *Hananim* (하나님) for God be changed to *Hanul Pumonim* (하늘父母님), Heavenly Parent. Unlike the English equivalent "Heavenly Parent," the Korean term Hanul Pumonim is both singular and plural, explicitly including both father and mother, as represented by the Chinese characters 父母. *Hanul Pumonim* therefore is the One Source, best represented by two.

Unmanifest and Manifest (Wuji and Taiji)



Returning to Zhou's *Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*, the opening phrase "*Wuji er Taiji*" (無極而太極) has intriguing significance in linking his *Diagram* with recent developments in Unification theology. The phrase "*Wuji er Taiji*" refers to the top two circles of the *Diagram*. This resonant phrase has been parsed many times over by experts in the nuances of Neo-Confucian thought, but it seems to be impossible to translate it into fully satisfactory English. [14] *Taiji* (Korean: *Taeguk*) is well enough rendered by "Supreme Ultimate" or "Great Ultimate", but the corresponding *Wuji* is much more difficult and ambiguous. One challenge is the mercurial nature of the character *wu* (無) in *Wuji* (無極), which can mean "non-" or "infinite potential" and has resonances in earlier Confucian as well as Daoist and Buddhist thought. [15] Another source of ambiguity is the connective *er* (而), with its range of linking and contrasting functions including "and," "yet," "also," "while," "moreover" and "however."

The conjunction *er* (而) thus holds the two terms *Wuji* and *Taiji* closely together without specifying their relationship precisely. This ambiguity can be viewed as theologically fruitful.

The phrase "*Wuji er Taiji*" as well as the *Diagram* itself became a subject of debate among early Neo-Confucians. The issue can be described as "the substantiality of the Source," whether the "whence from which" the visible substantial world as we experience it derives (comes forth, generates, etc.) is likewise substantial, or whether there is a separate incorporeal "*Wuji*" behind the scenes. Historically, the debate was won by those who argued that although *Wuji* and *Taiji* are spoken of and drawn separately, the two terms should be understood as inseparable descriptions of the One Source.

Unification theology would seem to agree that the two terms are inseparable descriptions of the One Source, and would likewise reject any suggestion that everything derives from a simple Nothing. The conjunction 而 in the Neo-Confucian phrase invites thinking of the two terms, *Wuji* and *Taiji*, as each predicated of the other. Once again, it appears that the One is best represented by two.

Over the past several years, an intriguing new theme has emerged in Rev. Moon's teaching "The God of Night and the God of Day." Many members of the Unification community have found this terminology genuinely puzzling. I would like to suggest, however, that when this theme is placed in fruitful proximity with the *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*, intriguing resonances emerge. The *Diagram* can be seen as depicting a flow from the unmanifest and mysterious *Wuji* to the manifest and evident *Taiji*, metaphorically from Night to Day. The Unmanifest, the *wu* (無) pole, seems to be beyond specific characteristics or predicates, simply the unfathomable. Nevertheless, when the two aspects or poles are held tightly together, there does seem to be one thing that could be predicated of the Unmanifest, namely, the urge or desire to manifest.

Manifestation, Heart-Motivation and Sincerity

The forms and processes of manifestation are depicted by the most common Unification diagram, known as the "Four Position Foundation" (四位基臺台). The diagram's four circles are arranged in a diamond pattern that is connected by lines of "give and receive" action. The formal

relation of the two horizontally paired circles is as “subject partner” (主體) and “object partner” (對象). The implications of “Origin–Division–Union Action” (正–分–合) are key to

understanding the dynamics of the various processes that are depicted using this diagram.[\[16\]](#)

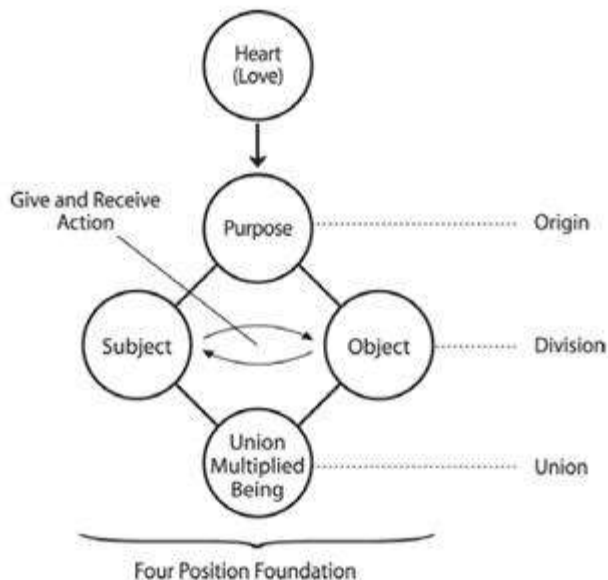


Fig. 11.2. Four Position Foundation and Origin-Division-Union Action

The four position foundation diagram in its various forms (sometimes the circles are filled with yin/yang markings) is used in Unification theology as the basic building block for understanding personal psychology (mind and body), family and societal relationships, and the various kinds of human connection with the world of myriad things. These three applications of the four position

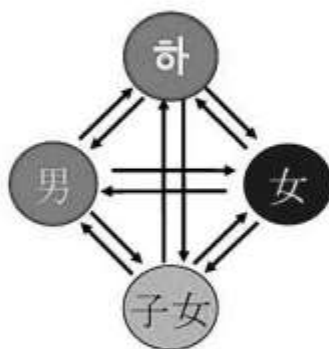
foundation—individual, family and in relation to “all things”—are depicted below from an OSDP slide:

4 位基臺의 種類

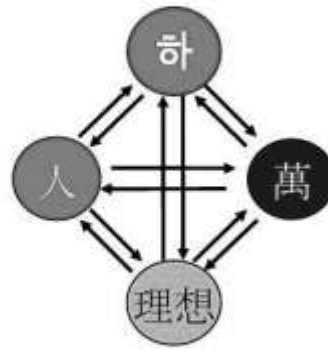
- ①個人的四位基臺 ②家庭的四位基臺 ③主管的四位基臺



個性完成
(人格完成)



家庭完成
(理想家庭)



主管性完成
(理想世界)

In Unification sources, this three-fold application of the four position foundation is linked to the biblical passage in Genesis 1:28 about “The Three Great Blessings.” Insights related to each of these three—completion and fulfillment of the individual through harmonious mind/body unity, establishment of an extended family network based on harmony among a couple, and a sense of responsibility toward all things—are also found in Neo-Confucian sources, as I have suggested elsewhere.[\[17\]](#)

A further elaboration of the four position foundation diagram, found in the Unification Thought books, adds “Heart” above/beyond Purpose at the top of the diagram. Heart (心情, *shimjeong*) is defined as “the irrepressible desire to give love.” Rev. Moon’s sermons abound with the idea and sentiment that behind the visible world of things and events is a passionate divine Heart that is

manifested in and through them. Unification Thought offers an explanation of the process of creation/manifestation called the “Heart-motivation theory.” This theory is put forward as an alternative to the reigning accidentalist paradigm often taken for granted today. [18] In other words, Unification ontology includes not only an account of the “dual characteristic” structure of the myriad things but also of the creative motive behind that structure, a “signature” on every aspect and item of the cosmos.

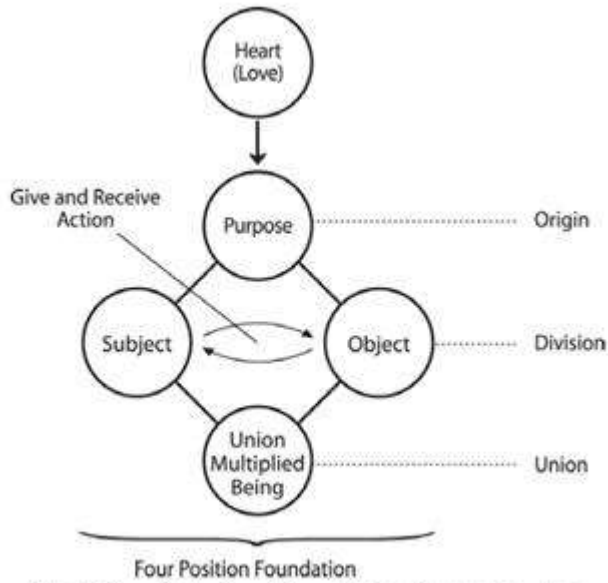


Fig. 11.2. Four Position Foundation and Origin-Division-Union Action

A fundamental quality that can be predicated of Heart (*shimjeong*) would be the desire to express or to manifest. Elaborating in this way, a re-interpretation of the Neo-Confucian *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate* along the lines of Unification theology would suggest that the unfathomable Wuji (無極) aspect of the Source is the locus of “Heart-motivation.” Furthermore, this unfathomable Heart would be the ultimate source of the “inability to bear the suffering of others” that

Confucians see as characterizing the common ground of Heaven and humanity, namely the core Confucian value of *ren* (仁), meaning human-kindness, benevolence. [19]

When Rev. Moon’s youngest son Hyung Jin was struggling to make personal sense of his father’s legacy, he was eventually led by his father to another core Confucian and Neo-Confucian value. He recalls:

I searched for months for a single Chinese character, ascending to the holy rock whenever I was home, that could sum up and embody the heart of *Hananim*... When *Abba* returned from abroad, I asked him to share with me what character was most precious to him. I had been waiting for this moment, for this teaching, for this wisdom... Without hesitation, he wrote a single character (as I asked him to limit it to one). It is a moment, an enlightenment, that I shall never forget. [20]

The character which Rev. Moon wrote was “*seong*” (誠), sincerity or authenticity. This *seong* is the central unifying concept between Heaven and humanity according to the Confucian classic *Doctrine of the Mean*. [21] For the Neo-Confucians, the authentic spiritual journey for human beings, those on the way of becoming sincere/authentic (誠之者), involves personal cultivation practice on the individual, family and cosmos levels. Further, in Unification insight, *seong* can also be understood as devotion. Devotion to the Heart of Heaven forms the vertical resonance or “resemblance” in the four position foundation diagrams discussed above. Through that four position foundation process, a person can connect with and become objective to the divine desire to manifest, and “allow the Divine to truly manifest in and touch this suffering world.” [22]

Application: Hoondokhwe

In describing his attitude toward learning and study from an early age, Rev. Moon remarks:

I was relentless with my teachers, digging deeper and deeper. I couldn’t accept any principle in the world until I had taken it apart and figured it out for myself... I poured myself completely into my studies and invested my full sincerity and dedication... Whatever the task, if we continue the

effort in this way, we eventually reach a mystical state.[23]

Within the past few years, perhaps as a strategy toward “routinization of charisma” (Weber), Rev. Moon initiated a new pattern for regular fellowship known as *hoondokhae* (訓讀會), literally “gatherings for reading and study.” The recommended format and the scope of texts for this practice have been in a process of continuous change and adjustment. The practice of *hoondokhae* may take various forms, from communal reading to interactive discussion. Now that Rev. Moon himself has passed on, *hoondokhae* has become increasingly central to the regular practice of Unificationists. In reflecting on how *hoondokhae* might develop, I would like to draw a comparison with the early Neo-Confucian practice of “investigation of things” (格物) and “savoring the text” (玩味).

Among the circle or fellowship of early Neo-Confucian disciples, one of their discoveries was that they could develop a mutual, reflective investigation of the classic or scriptural texts, coupled with personal cultivation practice, in a way that each could enhance the other. The practice of “savoring the text” was done in a hermeneutic circle of like-minded fellow students.[24] Their goal in “investigating things,” as recommended by the ancient Confucian classic, *The Great Learning*, was to discover the principle (*li*) in things and also in the classic or scriptural texts.[25]

At its best, the early Neo-Confucian fellowship shared the value of “reverence” (敬), characterizing not only the attitude with which each individual would approach the classic texts, but also the attitude with which “those engaged in learning” would treat one another. I am happy to say that I currently belong to a small *hoondokhae* group that is reminiscent of the Neo-Confucian fellowship. We are regularly studying and discussing some of Rev. Moon’s teaching texts in their original Korean language. Although my understanding of Korean is surely inadequate, what is salient to mention is the attitude that the group has been able to cultivate, a shared sense “reverence” (敬) and mutual regard that I find to be optimistic for the future.

If *hoondokhae* is to expand as a genuinely enriching practice for Unificationists, I believe that there must develop an open-ended approach to the texts, coupled with the “small group” dynamics of shared “investigation of things.” In such a circle, as in the early Neo-Confucian fellowship, participants can grapple with the texts’ difficulties on several levels: literal meaning, metaphorical implications, and “precept to practice.” Indeed, the *hoondokhae* texts themselves, like the dialogical Confucian classics, can thematize the give-and-take dynamic in the hermeneutic circle of learning. The practice, then, would provide an opportunity for discernment of *li* (Principle) to take place in collectively savoring the texts, exploring the principles and patterns of thought, and sharing the experiences of practical life and spiritual cultivation.

A concern I would like to express is that the insights recorded in the Original Principle books might become rote, recited rather than reflected upon. This is one of the challenging issues for the Unification community going forward: how to study these sources so that a creative understanding of Principle is possible, and regularly experienced. Recalling Neo-Confucian examples may help to forestall the tendency to rely on literalistic readings of particular texts, in favor of the practice of experiential savoring. Then, *hoondokhae* itself would imply an invitation to investigate “the principle” for oneself (自得), as it appears in the texts and also in the observable world around us. Discernment of the Principle would happen in community, through the shared perception that the world around us is philosophically, spiritually meaningful and revelatory. The focused intensity of having written Original Principle books available as guides for study could then be balanced and deepened by the reflectivity of “investigation of things” that attends to the myriad things and ordinary affairs. In other words, the Neo-Confucian practices of “savoring the text” and “investigation of things” are suggestive for the future directions that the Unification *hoondokhae* tradition might take, and might avoid taking.

Concluding Thoughts

During this period, just after the passing of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, it is felt as an urgent matter for the Unification community to come to a new self-understanding of what it means to live by the Original Principle, without being able to depend on his constant charismatic leadership. In this regard, an awareness of resonances with Neo-Confucian thought and practice can be of assistance in several ways.

First, recollecting the contours of Neo-Confucian understandings of *li* as principle and pattern can help formulate an authentic transmission of Rev. Moon's teaching that is both "true to the text" and experientially open to personal investigation for oneself. The conceptual resonance between Neo-Confucian "Heavenly Principle" (天理) and the Unification "Original Principle" (原理) suggests a reflective practice of discernment between those thoughts and feelings that are consonant with Divine Principle and those rooted in selfish human desires.

Second, like the *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*, the diagrams of Unification theology provide for a structured ontology that can give coherence to the idea of divine omnipresence and even omnipotence. The result, I believe, is a concept of the divine Source that is more personalistic than Neo-Confucian sources have tended to imply, but in a way that is still continuous with Neo-Confucian insights. Unification thinking would like to recover the more personalistic nuances of early Confucian sources that talk about Heaven "grieving" for the people who are misruled. At the same time, recalling the impersonality of Heaven in Neo-Confucian thinking would add another kind of "realism" to Unification theology in the form of recognizing "divine impersonality."

Third, the inseparable connection of Unmanifest and Supremely Manifest through the desire to manifest suggests a possible ground for understanding sincerity (誠) as that devotion which intimately connects a human person—and by extension a human community—with the originally expressive Heart of heaven, and which becomes an empowerment to manifest that Heart in ordinary life at all levels. In this regard, the Unification community can gain inspiration from the model of fellowship in learning to be authentically human that has been manifested in the Neo-Confucian tradition at its best.

Notes

[1] An earlier version of this article was presented to the Columbia University Seminar on Neo-Confucian Studies on May 3, 2013.

[2] By Neo-Confucian thought, I mean the revival of philosophical and spiritual interest in the resources of the Confucian tradition that began in the 11th and 12th centuries in China and later spread to Korea and Japan.

[3] Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073) was a founding figure of Neo-Confucian thought. His name may also be romanized as Chou Tun-i, as it is in *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996), p. 20.

[4] Sun Myung Moon, *As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen*, (Seoul: Gimm-Young Publishers, 2009; English edition Washington, DC: The Washington Times Foundation, 2010). For a historical account of Rev. Moon's Korean background and early life, see Michael Breen, *Sun Myung Moon: The Early Years, 1920-1953* (West Sussex, UK: Refuge Books, 1997).

[5] *Global Citizen*, p. 41. Michael Breen adds the story that young Rev. Moon was sometimes mischievous, writing characters with the brush between his teeth or his toes. See *Early Years*, p. 26.

[6] *Global Citizen*, p. 41.

[7] An intriguing comparison could be made with Tan Sitong's *Renxue* (仁學) on the connection between Neo-Confucian ontology and the newly introduced electronics.

[8] For a thorough account of the editions of "Divine Principle", see [Jin-Choon Kim, "A Study of the Formation and History of the Unification Principle," *Journal of Unification Studies* 2 \(1998\): 49-69.](#)

[9] I am working on an exploration of the similarities and differences between Neo-Confucian and Unification understandings of *li* from the viewpoint of cognition and discernment. So far, the expression of Unification epistemology in the Unification Thought books has been largely shaped by debates with figures in the Western philosophical tradition, so the comparison with Neo-Confucian sources is a fruitful field for further development.

[10] This cognate relationship was pointed out to me some years ago by Michael Kalton, who has done extensive work on Korean Neo-Confucianism. His translation of the core Korean Neo-Confucian work of Yi T'oegye, *Ten Diagrams of Sagely Learning (Songhak Sipto)* is helpfully posted on his website at <http://faculty.washington.edu/mkalton/10dia%20ch1%20web.htm>. The first of the Ten Diagrams is Zhou Dunyi's *Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate*, which is the subject of the next section.

[11] *Exposition of the Divine Principle* (New York: The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1996), p. 20.

[12] *Exposition*, p. 20, n. 7.

[13] *Exposition*, p. 21.

[14] Wing-tsit Chan, for example, renders it as "The Ultimate of Non-being and also the Great Ultimate!" See *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 463. Rather than re-translating the phrase here, I would instead like to reflect on its fruitful ambiguities in the original language.

[15] *Wu* is often translated "Nothing." Proposed English translations for Wuji include "Ultimate of Non-being" (Chan, 1963), "Ultimateless" (Fung and Bodde 1953, Robinet 2008), "Limitless" (Zhang and Ryden 2002), "That which has no Pole" (Needham and Ronan 1978), and "Non-Polar" (Adler 1999). As can be seen, many of these possible English translations carry weighty western philosophical freight.

[16] For an explanation of these dynamics in the context of Unification Thought, see <http://www.unification-thought.org/neut/Neut11.html>.

[17] See my article "Forming One Body: The Cheng Brothers and Their Circle" in Tu Wei-ming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, eds., *Confucian Spirituality, Volume Two* (New York: Crossroad/Herder and Herder, 2004), pp. 56-71, especially 60-67.

[18] See *New Essentials of Unification Thought* (Unification Thought Institute, 2006), p. 59: "God's creation was neither accidental nor spontaneous. It was accomplished based on an irrepressible, inevitable motive with a clear and purposeful intention. This may be called the theory of creation motivated by Heart or, simply, the Heart Motivation Theory."

[19] "Inability to bear" the suffering of others is the incipient sign of *ren* in a person's own experience, as originally described by Mencius. In this context, tracing that capacity back to its creative source would allow a person to connect with the "grieving" Heart of heaven, a common theme throughout Rev. Moon's sermons over many decades. This Unification theological commitment produces a piety of prayer that moves in "sympathetic resonance" with the awesome and yet suffering, unfathomable yet palpable, Heart of God.

[20] Hyung Jin Moon, *A Bald Head and a Strawberry* (Tarrytown, NY: Sincerity Publications, 2004), p. 29. See also his subsequent book on Unification spiritual practice, *Cheon-Hwa-Dang: The House of Heaven's Harmony* (New York: HSA Publications, 2006).

[21] For a full and insightful exploration of seong (誠, Chinese: cheng) in the context of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, see Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (SUNY Press, 1989), especially pp. 71-81.

[22] *Bald Head*, p. 35.

[23] *Global Citizen*, pp. 58-59.

[24] See "Forming One Body," pp. 59-60. A more extensive discussion can be found in my *Hsieh Liang-tso and the Analects of Confucius: Humane Learning as a Religious Quest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 25-41.

[25] An example of “investigation of things” in a Unification context would be both studying the *Exposition of the Divine Principle* text’s description of the “dual characteristics” manifest in all the myriad things and thoughtfully observing those characteristics in the things themselves in the world around us.