

Dasuk's View on Religion

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Abstract

Dasuk Ryu Youngmo (多夕 柳永模, 1890-1981) is assumed as an intellectual in early modern Korea, who had a Koreanized-Christian spirituality. He was a mainstream Christian in his youth. However, Ryu had attempted to convert Western Christianity into Korean context since he was 23 years old. His ideas were well presented in the doctrine of God and Christology, which were based on his personal spiritual experiences. He denied the personalized God of Christianity and the divinity of Christ. He believed that one can become the son of God if realizing the eol (soul) that was bestowed on human beings. This idea was originated from the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism in Korea, which he studied throughout his entire life. Just as Korean religiosity is often considered the mixture of Korean religions, Dasuk's belief can be understood as a Koreanized Christianity. In this article, the author describes the religious ethos of Dasuk by tracing his creative interpretation of Christianity.

Keywords: Dasuk, non-orthodox Christianity, idea of God, Eol (soul), Eol Christology, EolNa (true self; soul self), Koreanized Christianity

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Received : July 07, 2020, Revised : July 30, 2020, Accepted : August 25, 2020

다석의 종교관

박정환

국문요약

다석 유영모는 한국화된 기독교 영성을 가진 한국의 초기 기독교인 영성가이다. 그는 젊어서는 주류 기독교를 믿었다. 그러나 23살이후 서구 기독교에서 한국적 맥락의 기독교인으로 변모했다. 그의 사상은 그의 개인적인 영성적 체험에 근거한 신과 기독교의 개념에서 잘 드러난다. 그는 인격적인 신을 거부했으며 그리스도의 신성을 거부했다. 그는 인간에게 부여된 열을 깨달으면 하느님의 자식이 될 수 있다고 생각했다. 이 사상은 그가 평생을 걸쳐 연구한 유교와 불교의 가르침에서 기인한다. 한국의 종교성이 종종 한국종교의 혼합으로 여겨지듯이 다석의 신앙은 한국화된 기독교로 이해될 수 있다. 이 논문에서는 다석의 창조적인 기독교 이해를 쫓아 다석의 종교적 핵심을 밝혀 보이도록 하겠다.

주제어: 다석, 비정통 기독교, 신관념, 열, 열기독론

I. Introduction

Dasuk Youngmo Ryu (多夕 柳永模 1890-1981) is a thinker who combined Christian doctrines with Korean religions. He was a hermit who was not famous when he was alive. Most of his disciples and scholars hold that he was a pluralist since he developed his thought as he accepted other religions. As a result, a question on his identity has been continuously raised. He clearly read the Bible and prayed to God, but still some hesitated to say that he was a Christian.

In particular, the doctrine of God and Christology are in the center of this argument. Although he said he was a Christian, his concept of God and Christ was quite different from mainstream ones. It was based on his academic background. He studied Confucianism when he was young by learning Confucius thoughts. He was also fascinated with Buddhism after his brother died when he was 21 years old. Later on, he translated a Taoist book. He was familiar with all three religions in Korea.

Therefore, there is a little argument in categorizing him as a pluralist. Most scholars who studied about *Dasuk* have been his disciples and liberal theologians¹. Korean conservative researchers² have not examined *Dasuk* since he was mainly known to liberal theologians. For this reason, there had been a limitation in dealing with *Dasuk*. His stereotyped image as a pluralist had been highlighted.

However, from my point of view, *Dasuk* is a very spiritual person who combined Christianity with Korean religious traditions. According to the preface of the Nan-lang gravestone (鸞郎碑序文), “there is a mysterious truth, and this truth is rooted in three religions, which is familiar with Korean people” (三國史記). Chiwon Choi, who wrote this gravestone, deemed that there had been an original Korean spirituality. *Dasuk* agreed with his opinion and applied the thought into his doctrine of God and Christology which then caused him to be labeled or believed as a heretic or non-traditional Christian.

In a strict sense, he was a person who was interested in spirituality based on Christianity. His spirituality is combined with two Korean main religions: Confucianism, Buddhism. It can be said that among the three religions, Christianity plays a main role in establishing his spirituality. He believed in God and accepted Jesus as the best figure who realized EolNa (얼나, true self, soul self). In this sense, the opinion that he was a relativist is inappropriate since God and Jesus was critical in his religious worldview. Nonetheless, it is not exact that he was an orthodox Christian in that he distorted the central doctrines of Christianity. The following section explains the process of how *Dasuk* extends his religious view and how he understands God and Jesus in his notions.

II. Theoretical Background on *Dasuk's* Religious View

After his death in 1981, many articles and books began to be published. There are primary and secondary materials on *Dasuk*. The researches of *Dasuk* are mostly based on his

¹ This article uses the words “a liberal theologian” to indicate a more flexible theologian, who does not reject any theological debates beyond the orthodox Christianity.

² In contrast to a liberal theologian, a conservative theologian means the one who is not open-minded in terms of Christian doctrines. They often categorize people who are different as heresy.

initial data, which are consisted of his voice recording and lecture notes. But since these are not academic writings, the information is not logical and is scattered everywhere. His daily recording is regarded as the key source about his thought and everyday life for 20 years from 26 April 1955 to 1 January 1975 (Ryu 1990). In addition to this, YMCA lectures and his writings published in *Chungchoon* (청춘) and *Dongmyon* (동명) from 1914 to 1925 are also vital, which was collected in a book (Ryu 2001a). Other essential sources are documents printed in *sungseojosun* from 1933 to 1941 and two more books: *Dasuk's Lecture* (다석강의) which was delivered in YMCA in 1956-1957 and *Dasuk's Last Lecture* (다석 마지막 강의) taught in *Dongkwangwon* (동광원) in 1971(Park 2014a, 19-20)

The most significant secondary texts are written by his disciples. They have formulated a system of *Dasuk's* thought and commented on the fundamental transcripts since *Dasuk's* thought had been considered somewhat difficult. As an example, Heung-ho Kim, one of his disciples, provides the explanation of *Dasuk's* daily records and Young-ho Park introduces *Dasuk* to the public in *Dasuk's* biography (Ryu 2001b;2006; Park 2012).

Based on these transcripts, scholars had analyzed *Dasuk's* religious position. Their researches can largely be divided into two. One is a group of people who maintains that *Dasuk* is a relative pluralist. For them, the matter of whether he is a Christian or not is not important. They believe that *Dasuk* was deeply affected by other religions in Korea although he was principally involved in Christianity. The other argues that *Dasuk* was still a Christian but did not belong to orthodox mainstream Christianity. Apart from these, there is one more group of people who do not consider him as a Christian because they categorize him as a heretic.

The first grouping of academics disputes that *Dasuk* is a pluralist. In his thesis, Myeongwoo Park tries to apply *Dasuk's* thought in the context of religious pluralism. He compares *Dasuk's* opinions with those of John Hick, Paul Knitter, and John Cobb as he understands *Dasuk* as the representative of religious pluralists in Korea (Park 2001;2009). Junghyun Yun attempts to grasp *Dasuk's* doctrine of God in 'nothing' from an oriental perspective (Yun 2001;2010). Likewise, Chaesoon Park also wrote several books on this topic (J. Park 2009;2013). He has perceived *Dasuk* as a Korean philosopher who studied on the philosophy of the unification of heaven, earth and human being. For him, *Dasuk* is a tremendous thinker whose areas are oriental religious thought, western Christianity, and modern philosophy (Park 2009; 2013). Park sees *Dasuk* as a religious pluralist who put weight on Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. These scholars assume that *Dasuk* admits all the religions and does not care of which religion he belongs to. *Dasuk* believed in God but was slightly different from mainstream Christianity. On the other hand, he recognizes God as the truth. In this sense, the second group is more reasonable.

Some scholars such as Yangmo Jung, Insik Choi and Chungbae Lee belong to the second group (Chung 2010; Choi 2004; Lee 2009, 2011). All of them are liberal theologians³ who accept *Dasuk* as one of non-orthodox and non-mainstream Christians. All of them analyzed *Dasuk's* doctrine of God and Christology from a similar perspective. They argue that *Dasuk* is a non-orthodox Christian, who maintains Jesus is a man and all the people can become the

³. They conducted a research on *Dasuk* in depth. Although *Dasuk* has different doctrines from orthodox Christianity, they do not reject his thought. I call this flexible group of scholars as a liberal theologian.

son of God.

In a similar vein, Dongu Kang who delves into *Dasuk's* religious thought traces the religious background of *Dasuk* from Tolstoy, Uchimura Kanzo, and Gandhi who belonged to the minority group of Christianity. According to him, *Dasuk* was influenced by Tolstoy's doctrine of God, the non-church movement of Uchimura Kanzo, and the asceticism of Gandhi (Kang 2002) Partly because of their influence, *Dasuk* had not been affiliated with Christian church and had not confessed the same God as ordinary Christians do. Nonetheless, he identified himself as a Christian and stuck to Christian faith. I, thus, will conclude that he is a non-mainstream Christian and spiritual person with many differences from orthodox Christian. The following section illuminates his doctrine of God and Christology as the evidence of this argument.

III. From mainstream Christianity to non-mainstream Christianity

In order to deal with *Dasuk's* Christian identity, *Dasuk's* experiences as a Christian have to be explained. *Dasuk* was a relatively early convert in Korean Christian history. He originally believed in the Western Christianity that missionaries transmitted. However, by degree, he formed his own doctrine. Even if he did not keep the orthodox Christian doctrine since 23 years old, it is interesting that he had a Christian identity.

Before describing *Dasuk's* ideas more in depth, a clear distinction between the mainstream or orthodox Christianity and non-orthodox Christianity is necessary. Mainstream Christianity is the doctrine accepted in the Councils of Nicaea and the Councils of Karl Ketone. That is, the Apostles' Creed are recognized as a confession, and at the same time, Jesus is believed as the perfect human and God, and as the Savior. *Dasuk* denied Jesus as God the son, the atonement of sins and the Savior. He rejected all the contents revealed by the Credo. *Dasuk* said, "I am unorthodox." If a Christian thinks that the apostolic creed is the absolute norm, *Dasuk* is not a Christian.

The focus of this paper is on whether *Dasuk* is a Christian. *Dasuk's* concept of God and Christ is dissimilar from the contents of the apostolic creed. Now, it describes the process of the change of his thought. In 1906 when he was 16 years old, he went to *Youngdong*(영동) church with Jungsik Kim, the manager of YMCA. *Dasuk's* conversion was related with the situation of Korea as well as his personal reflection. His disciple, Youngho Park explains that *Dasuk* had faith due to the sadness on the loss of the sovereignty in Korea (Park 2012, 78). In fact, some Korean people attempted to find hope in a new religion. Christianity in Korea then started to grow in those days (Park 2014b, 153-155).

Before he became a Christian, he had already been familiar with Confucianism embedded in the Korean culture. He had studied Chinese history and Confucian classics in *Hongmunseogol* (홍문서골) Confucian school since he was 6 years old. Although he went to *Suhadong* (수하동) elementary school when he was 10, he came back to the Confucian school after two years. He became very accustomed to Confucianism because of this. He said that he was influenced by Moses, Jesus, Confucius and Mencius (Park 2008, 111). He developed his idea on Christology from this acquaintance (Park 2014a, 71-73).

At the age of 23, he became an unorthodox Christian. He did not go to church but accepted the non-mainstream Christian doctrine. Park finds the reasons from his internal factors and the situations of Korea. However, the most significant cause was his radical change of perspective on Christ. He says as follows:

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Christians say that only Jesus is Christ, but not just Jesus is Christ. Christ is an eternal life. Believing in Jesus does not mean that we believe in the Cross. Believing the fact that one can be saved if one has faith in Jesus on the cross has nothing to do with me (Park 2012, 131).

He established a new Christology. He denied that only Jesus Christ is the Messiah and that Paul's doctrine was right. Then he insisted that he gained 'SokAl (속알, inner-self)', which means he could love God. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore his personal motive in having such thoughts. When he was 21, his only brother, youngmuk, died. He had ten siblings when he was young. However, eight of them died leaving only him and one of his brothers. When eventually his only brother died, he studied Buddhism to understand the meaning of life and death (Park 2014b 157). Another possible explanation is that he renounced Christian faith when he read Tolstoy's book in Osan (오산) school (Choi 2002, 173-179). Tolstoy rejected the doctrine of traditional Christianity. He thought that Jesus' teaching was holy but not all the words. The transcendent contents such as miracles, exorcism, and resurrection can be deleted because these make the words of God unclear. *Dasuk* also disagrees with the divine quality of Jesus. He did not believe that Jesus was the God even though he accepted the existence of Jesus. As a result, one does not need to pray to Jesus since he is not God. He thought that if Jesus is God, it is contradictory in that God was tested, tortured and died. According to him, Jesus was just one of the religious teachers such as Confucius and Buddha (Park 2014a, 85-89)

Based on Tolstoy's point, *Dasuk* turned down his original faith that Jesus is the Messiah and Savior. He said that "when I was 22 years old, I evangelized people, and believed in John 3:16 and the fact that one could be saved by the blood of Jesus on the cross. However, I have changed my thought (Park 2012, 131)." This change is observed in the doctrine of God and Christology.

As seen above, he has a Christian faith until he was 16 but he has changed his mind. It traces the characteristics of his views that had changed by examining the doctrine of God and the Christology. These two concepts are important in that one can see the non-mainstream Christian identity of *Dasuk*. Instead of accepting God as a human being, he adopted the emptiness(空) of Buddhism. Since he combined the Buddha's ultimate reality with the concept of God, *Dasuk's* God, the ultimate reality, had the appearance of attributeless existence. In addition, he rejects Jesus as God. He refuses Jesus' redemption and the fact that Jesus was the Savior. For him, Jesus is similar to Buddha in Buddhism. *Dasuk* had transformed these two major concepts into his own way, the perception of God and Jesus which are indispensable doctrines of the mainstream Christianity.

IV. The doctrine of God

In a sense, the recognition of heaven is that of God. Confucianism emphasizes on heaven as a principle in human being while Christianity focuses on God who has personality (Ryu 1986, 206). *Dasuk* did not completely agree with both perspectives. He added Buddhism with these two points of view. He created a new doctrine that is mixed with Buddhism thoughts. He uses the term 'void, sunyata (空)' in understanding the doctrine of God. He often says that "the darkness is bigger than the light" (Park 2012, 223). *Dasuk* uses this word

to explain human beings and tries to connect with the doctrine of God. Primarily, there are several meanings in this word 'darkness.' (Park 2017, 70) First, it illustrates the status of human beings. *Dasuk* imagines that human beings stay very shortly in this world and are in the darkness forever. Life is a very diminutive moment. Human beings live as a dot in the absolute space and then disappear into the darkness in the absolute room, into the void (Lee 2010a, 127). Secondly, darkness means that spirit is bigger than materials. Thirdly, the unconscious is greater than the conscious. He says as follows:

I am in the cutting edge of modernity in Korea. My spirit imprints 'Geut (꺄 edge)' in the middle of my mind at every moment when I realize. It is Gaonjikgi (가온찌기). This one point is me. I am at the edge, a dot and a geut...one line 'l' is called as 'e (0|),' which means the eternal truth of life. It is 'e(0|)' at the very moment when the eternal life comes out. The being that comes out from the eternal life to a space, uses body and is at the edge of a nation is me, 'je'...I am a dot (Ryu 2006, 223-227).

'Geut' is a being that hangs at the edge of the eternity, which is coined by *Dasuk*. It is a lifeline that is connected with the eternity and a being that was thrown into the world from the eternity. *Dasuk* calls this 'Gaonjikgi,' which means that we were born again as a new being at every moment when we realize ourselves in space and time. In the end, an instant being, 'geut,' is a light and the eternity, linked to a light, goes to the darkness.

Darkness is the beginning of the connection with emptiness (空). The darkness in *Dasuk's* concept is almost a vast empty space with nothing in it even if *Dasuk* did not accept that nothing was just empty. He seems to accept Christian God as the ultimate reality, God who embraces all beings.

He explores his inspiration in comprehending God.

If our life extends into the end, we will get the void, the absolute. That is, we will have eternal life in 'EolNa' with nothing. Void is the beginning of all creations and life. It is God. I also think of personalized God. God has personality but not a human being. He is a divine being. What I mean by personality is a beginning that transcends nothing and something. One should not be satisfied with substance in seeking God. One tries to find God since one cannot be contented with 'something' (Ryu 2006, 72).

Although he says that he also thinks of personalized God, it does not refer to the personalized Christian God. From God's perspective, it is true that the relative being also exists but it cannot prove that it does based on the original point of view. Relative beings exist in space and time but they will disappear one day. Thus, it cannot be clearly said that it exists since it disappears and is a moment comparing to the eternity. When one says it exists, it is a dot in the everlasting space and time. The absolute space and endless time is a standard (Lee 2010a, 125-127; Park 2017, 73-74).

God exists nothing beyond our imagination and awareness whilst He is something within our imagination and awareness (J. Yun 2010, 196). In the absolute world God exists but we cannot perceive it while beings are in our sensory world but they do not present in the absolute world. Therefore, we are 'something but nothing' whereas God is 'nothing but something' (Kim 2013, 124; Park 2017, 74).

Strong religious experience tends to make the object, God, into a person (Yun 1988, 64).

Hence people with religious experience easily attempt to personalize God or gods. However, it is a trap. *Dasuk* says God does not have a personality.

True God does not act as God. There is no reason that perpetual God reveals himself at one place. True God is not God that we wish. Truth includes always. True God is equal to nothing. Nothing is equal to true God (Ryu 2009. 932)

According to *Dasuk*, God is not a divine being that feels something and gets angry as men do although he had religious experiences. Rather *Dasuk* uses the Buddhistic world view of the absolute being in understanding Christian God. His God is the Buddhistic supreme being, which is the root of the world, as in Tao Te Ching (도덕경) 34, “covering the world but not being the master of the world.” Void(空) is the existing method. *Dasuk* says that “what we need to know is that Void is God’s appearance. The inner life of God is ‘Eol (얼, soul)’, the Holy Spirit. Void is true God” (Ryu 2006, 55-57).” He declines personalized God and attempts to find God from void in Buddhism.

As explained the darkness, the space that is empty without anything is the figure of the ultimate reality that *Dasuk* first accepted. But nothing is not only empty but also the origin of all existences. The authenticity of the words ‘色即是空, 空即是色’ is that nothing exists because all objects has no self-nature(自性). If one understands things in the Buddhistic theory of causality of the fundamental truth of Buddhism, the object exist like that again. Everything seems to be non-existent because it has no self-nature while the form existing in the theory of causality exists again and again. *Dasuk* regarded God as the truth of these emptiness. Darkness is simply a reality, which is the source of light and existence although there is nothing. It is the image of God. Just as the emptiness of Buddhism does not exist but it is the basis of everything, so God seems to exist as a source of all beings. Therefore, God does not exist as the form of the Trinity, but as an empty being in the darkness and, at the same time, a hugging of all beings. It is the same as the ultimate reality of Buddhism, which seems to be empty, but as being in relationships without self- nature. The God of *Dasuk* is darkness and the ultimate reality that contains all the beings at the same time.

Dasuk goes one step further from connecting God to the human mind. In Buddhism, it is said to be ‘一切有心造’. Especially, it was developed from the Yogacara thought, which is believed as the world was only one heart. He said that the ultimate reality of Buddhism, the ultimate reality of Christianity, God, and human heart are all one. God, the ultimate reality, is only the expression of human mind from the viewpoint of Buddhism. The concepts of *Dasuk* such as darkness, emptiness, and infinity meet with the light and truthful God and are reflected in the human mind

It is almost the same as *Donghak*(동학) thought teaches, which believes in external God, internal God, and God as absolute truth. In *Donghak* which is a Korean indigenous religion, there is heaven inside oneself. This thought is found in Confucianism and Buddhism. In Confucianism, heaven offers virtues to human beings, and Korean Buddhists suppose that the nature of Buddha exists in mind. *Dasuk* holds that Christian God is nothing but almost the same as the gods in other Korean religions.

V. Christology

For Christians, Jesus is the absolute Christ. However, pluralists do not claim that Christ is only Jesus. They consider that every religion has its own Christ (Ryu 2004, 209-210). *Dasuk* admits that all religions have Christs such as Jesus in Christianity. Jesus is not the only savior, providing the basis of the criticism on *Dasuk* from mainstream Christianity. Mainstream Christianity categorizes his belief as heresy since he does not believe that Jesus is the only savior, Christ.

Was *Dasuk* a Christian? For mainstream Christians, there is no reason to think about this question, which follows a negative answer. However, some scholars still see him as a Christian. The opinion that all religions have their own Christ makes the following characteristics. Firstly, his Christology reflects the Korean religious mindset. He tries to connect Christianity to Korean traditional religions by mentioning that Jesus can be found in the aboriginal religions. Secondly, *Dasuk* says that if one realizes that Eol God gives, one can reach the point that Jesus came. That is, they suppose that he overcomes the exclusivity of conservative Christianity that permits only Jesus as Christ by declaring that everyone can be the son of God if one realizes Eol.

As mentioned above, he was affected by Korean Buddhism and Confucianism. He borrows the realization of Buddhism and the filial piety of Confucianism. Of course, those virtues can be discovered from other religions and ethics. Korean Buddhism and Confucianism have especially emphasized on one's realization and filial piety respectively. As a Buddhist is aware of the nature of Buddha, so shall a Christian be aware of the son of God if he apprehends Eol. In a similar way, *Dasuk* understands Christian faith in the notion of filial piety. When Christianity was introduced in Korea, there was a misunderstanding that Christianity ignored filial piety. However, *Dasuk* grasps that Christianity is closely linked with this.

5.1 MomNa (몸나, body self) and EolNa (얼나, true self, soul self)

Dasuk classified human beings into three: body, mind and Eol. He added suffix 'na(나, I)' in the words so that he named these MomNa (몸나, body self), MamNa (맘나, mind self), and EolNa (얼나, true self, soul self). MomNa and MamNa together are called as JeNa (제나, selfish self), which means selfish self (Lee 2010b, 162). *Dasuk* again categorized the ego of human being into two. JeNa is the false self that cannot meet God and EolNa is the original self of man that God gives. EolNa is the eternal life as the son of God that governs JeNa (Ryu 2006, 108)

JeNa is inherited in the form of greed (貪), ill will (瞋) and delusion (癡). Therefore, making a relationship with God is the purpose of human life, which can be developed when one overcomes the inherited self, the nature like animal. Human being has to grow from MomNa to EolNa, which means transformation and maturity. MomNa becomes EolNa when one meets God and receives God's Eol. It is the notion of 'born-again' (Kim 2012, 9). The most important perspective on human being is this transformation from JeNa to EolNa. The most conspicuous figure is Jesus, who was completely transformed from JeNa to EolNa.

Jesus, the son of man, was not different from others. He was born with MomNa, could not live forever with his body, and could not be resurrected. From MomNa's perspective, he was the same human being as others are. Nevertheless, he practiced affection between father

and son in Confucianism as the son of God. The only difference between Jesus and others is that Jesus was a good son to God with Eol, received from God. As a result, he became a Christ since he had Eol. In this sense, he was the same human being but different from others. In other words, if one well develops Eol received from God, one can become the son of God as Jesus did (Park 2014a, 106-107).

5.2 Eol Christology

When Jesus said, “when he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me” (John 12:45), ‘me’ means the Eol of God in mind. Everyone as well as Jesus can be the only son of God if one has Eol (Kim 2013, 151). One who well develops EolNa can be the son of God as Jesus was. Thus, *Dasuk’s* Christology is called as ‘Eol Christology’ (Park 2014a, 108)

Eol makes God the father and Jesus the son the same. Jesus became the son of God by developing EolNa. EolNa is connected with God and Jesus. In Buddhism, everyone can be a Buddha if one becomes enlightened because of the nature of Buddha. As Buddhists understand, *Dasuk* thinks that everyone can become the son of God as Jesus did unlike orthodox Christians (Lee 2005, 241). *Dasuk* considers that God allows us to become the son of God since God loves the world and EolNa is the eternal life. Jesus and we have the same Eol and Jesus shows EolNa.

5.3 Affection between father and son

Dasuk explains the relationship between God and Jesus with the affection between father and son, which is one of the five relationships in Confucianism. *Dasuk* carefully deals with the text that Jesus calls God his father.

Jesus
He clearly saw God,
and called Him my father from the beginning.
It means that therefore, I will live as his son (Chung 2010, 32)

It is *Dasuk’s* poem that he decided to receive the Holy Spirit and to live like Jesus (Chung 2010, 42). *Dasuk* says that there had been some people who called God father but not like Jesus who clearly said that God was his father (Ryu 2006, 914). Jesus had many experiences on God and served God as his father.

One should be extremely devoted to God. Filial piety is not for father in this world. All the people in this world can conduct the filial piety when one performs the filial piety to God. Jesus was a devoted son to God. No one had lived like Jesus (Ryu 2006, 916).

Dasuk finds out the truth of affection between father and son from the text that Jesus calls God father.

He respected Jesus as the best saint. Affection between father and son is Christianity. Christianity more focuses on filial piety than Confucianism. One should actively go to God. Unkindness to God is not to rely on God. The New Testament reveals the affection between God and Jesus (Kim 2012, 170)

To sum up, *Dasuk’s* Christology starts from the text that Jesus calls God father. *Dasuk* understands it as filial piety. Jesus on the cross is a kind of transformation from MomNa to EolNa (Kim 2012, 181). All the people can go through this transformation, which is

conversion. *Dasuk* emphasizes on realization rather than on the doctrine of atonement. When one realizes EolNa, one can call God father. Jesus did not die for salvation. Jesus could call God as father because of EolNa and became one with God (Kim 2012, 181).

Dasuk stuck to Jesus by the end of his life. Although he regarded Jesus as one of saints in other Korean religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, he thought that Jesus was his last and best teacher. He considers that Jesus is the best saint that he has to follow even though he denies that he can be saved by Jesus. He said as follows:

I have an important figure. He is my best friend who teaches me whenever I go to a wrong way. It is Jesus Christ who rebukes and teaches me. It is Jesus who I cannot forget by the last day of my life...It is only Jesus that I think as my teacher. Knowing and believing in Jesus are dissimilar. I accept only Jesus as my teacher (Ryu 2006, 148-149).

Jesus was very precious for *Dasuk* in that Jesus taught him, not saved him. For *Dasuk*, Jesus was a good figure as an example who realized EolNa rather than a savior that Christians normally believe.

VI. Conclusion

We have estimated *Dasuk's* view on the doctrine of God and Christology. Basically, he believed in God. However, he did not understand that God has a personality. *Dasuk* meditated on the darkness and stood in an empty space, connecting all the realities. But the emptiness is not just empty, but again there is a thing understood in the theory of causality. The empty space conceived again all the things. The empty space does not stop simply from being absent, but it re-exists. Similarly, he saw Christian God as the ultimate reality that is the basis of all things and phenomena. The perception of all things was based on the doctrine of Buddhism, which is the origin of all minds, and developed an innovative thought to see both God and human mind as the same reality. This is, in many ways, different from mainstream Christianity, which naturally believes the personalized God.

Dasuk's Christology is also slightly different from that in orthodox Christianity. Jesus was not a savior but a teacher, who realized EolNa. Whoever apprehends Eol can be a Christ as Jesus could, which is analogous to Buddhism that elucidates to become a Buddha by realization. In addition, he interprets the relationship between God and Jesus from a Confucian point of view. One should build a good relationship with God such as that between father and son in Confucianism. Due to his emphasis, *Dasuk's* Christology is called as Eol-Christology or filial piety theology.

Dasuk's religion has several features. First of all, his religious thought is based on Christianity and he believes in God but that God does not have a personality. He acknowledges Jesus but he denies the resurrection and divine characters of Jesus. Therefore, he is not a Christian according to the mainstream Christianity. But to be more precise he can be said to be a non-mainstream Christian who is away from mainstream Christianity. He has been concerned about maturity, transformation, and becoming the true self on the basis of Christianity. In this respect, it can be said that he is at least a person who had made an effort to develop his spirituality

In conclusion, although it is clear that *Dasuk* is a thinker who belongs to the mainstream Christianity in modern times, it is worth to note that he has spirituality in the present times. Especially, considering that Korean religious tradition cannot be understood completely without thinking of Buddhism or Confucianism, Christianity has to be re-interpreted in these

two religious backgrounds.

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