

Ham Sok Hon, a Pioneer of Korean Cosmopolitanism

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Abstract: This paper discusses an aspect of Ham Sok Hon's philosophy, which the author argues would reflect, and contribute to enriching, the theory of cosmopolitanism. Ham was arguably one of the 20th century's most influential, yet controversial, thinkers and political activists—particularly in the progressive movement of modern Korea. The author revisits his philosophy of *ssial/saengmyŏng* to find a more persuasive metaphysical ground to draw an enlarged and deepened sense of community than that of dominant cosmopolitan theories. To properly place his philosophy within the larger discussion of cosmopolitanism and highlight its uniqueness, the author presents a brief overview of major cosmopolitan theories first, along with their shortcomings, and then constructs Ham's cosmopolitan vision by focusing on three specific insights: (1) *ssial/saengmyŏng* (씨알/生命, life) as the agent, (2) religion and politics for *ipch'ejŏk in'gan* (立體的人間 the multi-dimensional human), and (3) narrative and memory as the driving force of cosmopolitanism.

Keywords: Ham Sok Hon; Korean religion; ssial philosophy; cosmopolitanism

1. Introduction

As the world becomes smaller due to the great innovation of digital technology and accelerated transnational economic and social activities, both the physical and cognitive boundaries between countries are becoming blurred, and the interactions between people, whether from nearby or afar, and their moral impact, are more instant and immediate than ever. Thus, the conventional notion of a human community based on a clear boundary, whether geographical or conceptual, does not seem to fully respond to the complex moral issues of the highly interconnected and constantly changing world of today; this problem demands, more than ever, an alternative political vision that could offer a larger and more malleable sense of community in which, I believe, cosmopolitanism can be established. In particular, ongoing global problems projected in uncontrollable refugee crises coupled with geopolitical instability and economic injustice are pressing us further to find a better way to live together, with a new spirit, virtue, and perspective.

This is where Ham Sok Hon¹ (1901–1989) comes in, who I suggest could offer a good response to this pressing issue. Known as the Gandhi of Korea, Ham Sok Hon was arguably one of the 20th century's most influential, yet controversial, thinkers and political activists, particularly in the progressive movement of modern Korea. He inspired almost every corner of Korean progressivism, including minjung theology, political activism against military regimes, and the nonviolence movement. Not only was his life fully dedicated to fighting the enduring problems of humanity, which we still suffer today, such as political oppression, economic injustice, hegemonic power struggles in international relations, and environmental problems, but his philosophy also envisioned a larger sense of community, intended to cultivate a boundary-breaking disposition in our political

¹ McCune–Reischauer Romanization was used for Korean words except for personal names such as Ham Sok Hon to reflect the way they appear in other publications.

consciousness. In this paper, I revisit Ham Sok Hon²'s *ssial* philosophy to construct a system of thoughts, which I think he could have established for cosmopolitanism, and his possible contribution to its theory. Although there are numerous thought-provoking themes in Ham's life and works such as his pluralistic theology, political activism, and deep involvement in Quaker-inspired pacifism, I believe that cosmopolitanism is the most interesting and timely theme that could effectively connect his philosophy to those enduring problems of humanity and it is the best conceptual device to unravel the philosophical complexity of, and identify the fundamental objective of, the idea of *ssial*. To properly place his philosophy in the larger discussion of cosmopolitanism and highlight its uniqueness, I present a brief overview of major cosmopolitan theories first, along with their shortcomings, and then try to construct Ham's vision of a cosmopolitan community particularly through the discussion of his three insights: (1) *ssial/saengmyōng* (生命, life) as the agent, (2) religion and politics for *ipch'e-jok in'gan*³ (立體的人間, the multi-dimensional human), and (3) narrative and memory as the driving force of community.

2. Overview of Cosmopolitan Theory and Shortcomings

Cosmopolitanism is the theory or ideology that all human beings are members of a single community. It is a legal or institutional agenda for some political theorists or an organizational ideal of moral perfection for some ethicists; it is simply a state of mind for some religious thinkers. The idea of recognizing and building a single community for all humans has long been part of our ambitious intellectual, spiritual, and sometimes even militaristic dreams. In every stage of our intellectual history, we have tried to find better ways to perceive, interact, and embrace *the other* for the quest of the whole/true being or whole/true community. It is a daunting task because what *the other* and the community refer to are often very broad and elusive. In the discussion of cosmopolitanism, *the other* usually means fellow humans. The community usually means a social entity. However, *the other* can also mean something else, such as animals, ancestral spirits, God, or cosmic energy, particularly when discussed in a Neo-Confucian discourse. Likewise, the community can mean a *civitas dei* when discussed in an Augustinian political discourse. Despite this complexity, most cosmopolitan theorists have focused on the sociological dimension in which most of our activities, including establishing a community and laws and interacting with others, occur. However, this is the point where I believe Ham's *ssial* philosophy sheds light on some shortcomings of the dominant cosmopolitan theories and offers new insights into the explanatory ground. In particular,

² Collected Works of Ham Sok Hon (Ham Sōkhōn), Pabosae Ham Sok Hon (마보새 함석헌: 동서를 아우른 생명평화사상).

Human Revolution (인간혁명);

The Meaning of Ssial and Minjung Movement (씨알의 의미와 민중운동);

Voice of the People (씨알의소리 통권 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8);

Queen of Suffering, A Spiritual History of Korea (뜻으로 본 한국역사);

Only Those Who Think Live (생각하는 자가 산다);

On a Road of the World (세계의 한 길 위에서);

Prospect for a New Era (새 시대의 전망);

Unended Lecture (끝나지 않은 강연);

World History through Meanings (뜻으로 본 세계역사).

Available online: <http://ssialsori.net/> (accessed on 10 January 2020).

³ The literal meaning of '*ipch'e-jok*' is stereoscopic. Stereoscopy is a photographic technique, which makes two pictures shown as one 3D image. When Ham used this term, '*ipch'e-jok*,' he meant a state in which multiple dimensions of human nature (body, reason, and spirituality) are closely linked together so that the full depth of human life can be revealed and a state in which spiritual growth plays as the anchor for the growth of the other dimensions. Thus, the English word, stereoscopy, would not do justice to what Ham meant by it. In this paper, I use 'multi-dimensional.'

there are three issues with which Ham's philosophy can engage in meaningful conversation: issues of elitism, reason as the foundation, and agency.

As one can speculate from the etymology of the Greek term, *cosmopolis*, the incipient effort to envision a larger political entity than one's own homeland was already made by ancient Greek philosophers. Diogenes' "citizen of the world" and Cicero's "common right of humanity" were the prototypes, and so was Socrates' philosophical "dissident citizenship" (Villa 2001, pp. 3–28). Alexander the Great's conquests to build a world empire of cosmopolitanism uniting East and West under the Hellenistic Civilization was another ancient attempt of cosmopolitanism. Although these ancient prototypes do reveal our desire and potential to go beyond the default socio-political identity, they all reflect our ambition for geographical expansion or the pursuit of power. In other words, the ancient Greek philosophers do not show a genuine intent to establish a *cosmopoliteia* (universal regime) based on contemporary egalitarian and justice principles. On the other hand, they seem to have thought of new dispositions or skills to effectively respond to changes in their enlarged territories and political institutions. In addition, the agent for this proto-cosmopolitan vision was not the ordinary people. It was the elite, the sage, or the superior agent, such as the philosopher king or the Greek and Roman antiquity, which gave the definition of the cosmopolitan. Stoic philosophers' cosmopolitan vision was more articulate than that of their predecessors. They started thinking of human reason and natural and cosmological law as the foundation of world citizenship. Differing from the negative view of the Cynics such as Antisthenes, who put extreme individualism above social convention, the Stoics affirmed moral obligations toward humans anywhere due to the common rational faculties. Nevertheless, most ensuing Stoics did not completely escape from the accusation of elitism in identifying the agent of a cosmopolitan community. It was the wise philosopher that qualified as a citizen in a cosmic city or world-state ruled by the gods. In the vision of the Stoics, the leader looks down on the ordinary people in contempt from his noble and sublime height (Pangle 2011, p. 42). Cosmopolitan virtues and community were thus exclusive properties of the elite.

In the meantime, Immanuel Kant, who envisioned a moral world in *the Critique of Pure Reason*, presents an egalitarian view in which all human beings are equally positioned by their rational ability.⁴ For Kant, the cosmopolitan community is possible due to our rational faculty, which enables to discern right from wrong and our good will for the categorical imperative. Although Kant "provides a blueprint for action or a set of principles available to anyone" (Kleingeld 2012, p. 18), there still remains the problem of reason as the foundation for cosmopolitan life. He brilliantly explained where our morals come from and how they should be assessed. His moral theory does not, however, clearly explain from what kind of foundation we can establish a cosmopolitan vision and what type of agency can build a cosmopolitan scale of life. The purview of the categorical imperative has its limits. He might have nuanced these issues in his *Perpetual Peace*, but never imagined a global community whose perception and treatment of others go beyond the level of conditional or calculative hospitality. Reason as the foundation is definitely a necessary condition, but not a sufficient one. No matter how intelligent and civilized they are, rational agents are constantly challenged by the boundary-drawing nature. History has long witnessed that people with rational minds rise against each other with their idiosyncratic views of happiness and justice. For instance, Kant's formulation of universality can be easily collapsed by a maxim that we usually consider as immoral.⁵

His cosmopolitan proposal of a federation of states is also questionable. Following the social contract model, Kant assumes that individual states act in international relations as individual humans do in interpersonal relations (Mitev 2010). However, states are not moral persons: moral norms are not designed for the act of the state. Even in interpersonal relations, established norms and laws often fail to enforce people to perceive, and interact with, each other in certain ways. As

⁴ (Kant et al. 2011).

⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre argues that immoral maxims can pass Kant's formulation of universality. For instance, such immoral maxims as "Keep all your promises throughout your entire life except one" and "Let everyone except me be treated as a means" can be rationally universalized" (MacIntyre 2013, pp. 54–55).

Reinhold Niebuhr argues in his magnum opus, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, the moral law and impulse expected for human individuals cannot be assumed for organizations and institutions (Reinhold 1960). Therefore, the Kantian theory does not offer a complete framework for our cosmopolitan ideal, but provides a necessary foundation to usher in another important catalyst to move forward. It is spirituality that Ham tries to add to the discussion of cosmopolitanism. He believed that the vital force to build a sense of cosmopolitan community was the power of transcendence, the power to go beyond any type of barrier, including rationality itself, parts of which are often controlled by divisive minds. Ham's spirituality, which is *ssial* philosophy, is not a mystical state with a religious affiliation, but an advanced civic mind in which universal reason and spiritual awakening can collaborate; the former helps us accurately observe and assess the world and the latter helps us perceive and treat all living beings with dignity.

3. Cosmopolitan Vision in Ham's *Ssial* Philosophy

3.1. The *Ssial*

Prior to my discussion of three insights that Ham could offer for the shortcomings of the cosmopolitan theory discussed above, it seems worth touching on the basic understanding of the notion of *ssial* for those who have no background knowledge of Ham's philosophy. As one might expect from his high status in the intellectual history of Korea, a considerable amount of research on Ham's *ssial* philosophy has been conducted in Korean academia. The works of Park (2013a) and Kim (2012) offer excellent conversations about Ham's philosophy and thought in general. A variety of theological and political meanings and implications of *ssial*, including its relationship with *minjung* theology and democracy, have been discussed by numerous scholars (Lee 2006; Park 2013b; Lee 2010; Jung 2006). I will now provide a brief overview of Ham's *ssial* philosophy. The origin of the notion of *ssial* goes back to Yu Young-Mo, Ham's most significant mentor, who coined the term *ssial* after the Korean War, at a public lecture in YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association). He came up with the idea of *ssial* while interpreting a maxim of the Great Learning (大學之道在明明德在親(新)民 在止於至善) (Ham, *Meaning*, pp. 231–232).⁶ This term originated in Yu's translation of *ch'inmin* (親民) with native Korean words, *ssial ōboem* (씨알어빔) (Ham, *Voice* 3, p. 346). Having experienced and witnessed the tremendous suffering of his people during an incredibly tumultuous time, Yu thought that the general Korean terms for the people and the masses such as *min* (民) and *paeksŏng* (百姓) would not do justice to his philosophical argument for people as active agents for social change and political liberation (Ham, *Meaning*, p. 231). The concept of *min* presumes a permanent, hierarchical or patron–client relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Its Chinese compound word, *minch'o* (民草),⁷ has limits to communicating *chōhangŭisik* (抵抗意識, the consciousness of resistance) (Ham, *Meaning*, p.

⁶ “The Meaning of *Ssial* and Minjung Movement (씨알의 의미와 민중운동-Meaning, hereafter)”, the *Collected Works of Ham Sok Hon* (hereafter *Collection*), accessed January 20, 2018, http://ssialsori.net/bbs/board.php?bo_table=ebook. Two different collections of Ham's writings have been published in Korea: (1) (Ham 1987) *Ham Sok Hon Chōnjip* (함석헌전집 1987, hereafter *Chōnjip*) and (2) (Ham 2009) *Ham Sok Hon Chōjakchip* (함석헌저작집 2009, hereafter *Chōjakchip*). Both were published by Hangilsa. There is another collection available on-line in the website entitled Pabosae Ham Sok Hon (바보새 함석헌: 동서를 아우른 생명평화사상, hereafter, *Pabosae*, <http://ssialsori.net/>). This collection was created and maintained by Chung Hyeonpil, former executive director of the Ham Sok Hon Memorial Foundation(함석헌기념사업회). Most citations of Ham Sok Hon in this paper came from the *Collected Works of Ham Sok Hon* of Pabosae (hereafter *Collection*). *Collection* also includes his famous magazine of social criticism, *Voice of the People* (씨알의소리 통권, hereafter *Voice*). The magazine number follows the numbering of *Collection* instead of the original journal number. They are all available in PDF format. In particular, each of in-text citations from *Collection* hereafter includes an abbreviated subtitle (*Meaning*, e.g.) to indicate the work and page numbers. There are a few citations of Ham's works quoted from secondary sources. They are from either *Chōnjip* or *Chōjakchip*.

⁷ The Korean word for *minch'o* (民草) is *paeksŏng* (백성); *min* and *ch'o* means people and grass respectively. The origin of this term is unknown. This word is often used to express people with persistent will to survive.

231). Similarly, *paeksŏng* nuances a context of feudalism in which people are incapable of influencing or transforming their environment and society. It does not measure up to the concept of *chŭkchajŏk minjung* (卽自的 民衆, *people-for-themselves*⁸), which Yu inspired first and Ham continue to develop later (Ham, *Meaning*, p. 261).⁹ Yu believed that the Korean word, *ssial*, was a better term than other common words of Chinese origin, in making his philosophical points clearer.¹⁰

Influenced greatly by Yu's philosophy, Ham continued to use, develop, and expand this notion of *ssial* to properly address the creative role of the masses for social change. The term *ssial* literally means grassroots or seeds¹¹ (Ham, *Meaning*, 235). According to Ham, 씨 is derived from seed and 알 from egg. This compound word itself came from the Chinese word, 種子. The Korean word for this term would be 씨앗 or 씨앗 (Ham, *Voice 1*, 15)¹². In political conversation, it generally refers to the masses, the people on the bottom end of the social ladder, that experience day to day social injustice, including political and economic oppression and exploitation. What is more important about Ham's use of the term is the metaphysical significance of the ending part of this compound word, which is 알(알). Put concisely, *al*, which consists of three parts—○ (the utmost, heaven), ● (the innermost, the self) and ㄷ (moving)—represents the union of the microcosm and the macrocosm (Kim 2011), which is often understood as *innaech'ŏn* (人乃天)¹³ in Korean philosophy (Lee 2010, pp. 221–222). Just as a *ssial* as a seed is an organic entity, which has the potential to be able to blossom into a fully-grown plant or tree, people—as the author of their own destinies—innately have the power to move and transform their lives and surroundings to attain the ideal stage of being. Full potential, here, means the maximum ontological possibility of the person. At the same time, it means one's cognitive and spiritual capacity to reflect and embrace the whole within oneself, which Ham called *chŏnch'ein* (全體人, the whole human being) (Park 2005, p. 187). This concept of *chŏnch'ein* reflects Gandhi's idea of unity (Atman and Brahman).¹⁴ It represents our sublime human nature and implies a divine duty to connect, live, and prosper together with other beings. Ham's later project of the *ssial* farm was modeled after Gandhi's *asharam* movement, intent on the enlightenment of both spirituality and political consciousness.¹⁵ He believed that the new Earth and heaven should be realized by the transformation of the people's self-consciousness and its ensuing political manifestations.

⁸ Ham's notion of *chŭkchajŏk minjung* can be compared to Sartrean *being-for-itself* (*pour-soi*) in that the *ssialized* people are independent, autonomous, and authentic in actualizing their full ontological potentials, not determined by their physical necessities and socio-political reality.

⁹ The term *chŭkchajŏk* (즉자적, 卽自的) came from Hegel's *ding an sich* (thing-in-itself). Ham refers to a passive and reactionary characteristic. In contrast, *taejajŏk* (대자적 민중, 對自的, for-itself) *minjung* means people who exercise critical thinking and try to move society forward.

¹⁰ (Lee 2020).

¹¹ "Voice 1", *Collection*, p. 15.

¹² Ibid. "씨알이란 말은 씨라는 말과 알이란 말을 한데 붙인 것입니다. 보통으로 하면 종자라는 뜻입니다. 종자는 물론 한문자의 종자에서 온 것입니다. 순전한 우리 말로 하면 씨앗 혹은 씨앗입니다". "Ssial is the compound word of seed and egg. Its general meaning is seed, *chongja*, which came from Chinese origin. The pure Korean word is *ssiat* (씨앗) or *ssigat* (씨앗), which means "seed".

¹³ The concept of *innaech'ŏn* was originated from Suun Cho'e Cheu, founder of Tonghak. However, Ham's use of *innaech'ŏn* is closer to the new definition of Yi Tonhwa, who made a great contribution to systematizing the Tonghak philosophy and reinterpreting it for modern contexts in the early 20th century. While there is a gap, according to Suun's notion, between the divine and humans, because the fact that God dwells within us as the Lord does not mean that we humans are God. Yi's *innaech'ŏn* takes a step further. It suggests not only the divine nature of humans but also the divine union with God. Ham's *ssial* philosophy reflects Yi's interpretation.

¹⁴ (Gandhi 1968) Discussing the influence of the Advaita Vedanta School on Gandhi's notion of Truth, Glyn Richards says, "Gandhi equates the Self with Truth or God and goes so far as to insist that prayer is the worship of the Self, an invoking of the divinity within, a petitioning of 'my Higher self, the real self with which I have not yet achieved complete identification (Richards 1986, p. 4)."

¹⁵ Mansu Chŏng, "이발소 50 년 노우트 2: 이발을 생각하며 (50 years of Barber Shop Note 2: Thinking About Haircut)", "Voice 85", p. 99.

In contrast to most political philosophers and theorists of his time, who often assumed the weakness of the masses' political intelligence and will, Ham tried to raise the people to a higher ground in moving our society forward.¹⁶ The *ssial*-awoken people are neither bystanders nor blind followers. They are the enlightened people. Although the *ssial* do not seem to have wealth, power, and status to speak of, their shared identity transcends boundaries, their shared voice speaks for truth, and their collective action moves our society in the right direction. Ham believed that the people as the *ssial* have the ability to translate, into a creative force, their pent-up anger and their experience of suffering from the oppression of the powerful, if they are properly guided (Kim 2017, p. 13). He said, "For a world revolution, the *ssial* should speak up (세계 혁명을 위해서 씨알이 소리를 내야합니다)." ¹⁷ Wansang Han agreed with Ham on the active role of the masses, stating that "Although the *ssial* are the ruled, often looking dead, they are, in fact, the autonomous subjects (主體的 被支配者) always rebounding to life" (Ham, *Meaning*, p. 235). This means that what drives human history is not the elite or the powerful but the one that struggles and grows at the bottom end of the social ladder and that eventually feels, and works for, the divine awareness of and calling for the community of humanity and life. The bottom end for Ham is, of course, not just economic and political. It is metaphysical, meaning "bare" and "original (맨)." The *ssial* is our original nature and the original *telos* toward which our ethics and politics have to constantly evolve. Therefore, people of the *ssial* should be distinguished from the people of liberation theology, which is a socio-political class, the oppressed. Although Ham believed that the historical narratives of the oppressed provided the deepened, enlarged compassion necessary to envision a virtuous community, it was not the social status but the historical experience that brought about the *ssial* consciousness. According to Ham, historical experience or enlightenment is open to everyone. Ham argued that we all need to be a *maensaram* (맨사람, naked person) to think of any shape and form of community. He meant "being a person, as who he was, born from his mother, to whom nothing else has been added" (Ham, *Meaning*, p. 126).¹⁸

In other words, beginning as a concept of a new personal identity, the concept of *ssial* points to the ultimate destination of our perception of *the other* and community. It is the powerful source through, and the ideal direction to, which we must build the community of humanity. The status of economic and political power does not matter. The person's awareness of the common origin and goal of life, particularly in the metaphysical dimension, and his strong and sincere belief in the political realization of that goal are fundamental qualifications to become a *ssial*.

3.2. Three Insights into Cosmopolitanism

The basic understanding of *ssial* presented above shows Ham's optimism about the creative role of the masses and their suffering and the universal community. However, it still needs further articulation to become more relevant to the main concern of cosmopolitanism, centered around questions of the justification and the possibility of universal solidarity. In this section, I will focus on the three insights that Ham's *ssial* can offer. What I mean by insight is specifically an understanding that we can draw from his poetic and prophetic style of writings. Just as German Romantic literature engaging in various socio-political issues was characterized by Kleingeld, Ham's works are full of "imagery, provocations, questions, exhortations, perspectives, and stimuli" (Kleingeld 2012 p. 281). His agendas are not of natural or social sciences but of Diltheyian human sciences. This means that the main objective of his work is to find ways to give integral relations to all of our intellectual activities and our physical engagement in the natural world through discovering deep symbolic expressions of human activities and interpreting historical life.¹⁹ Therefore, my discussion intends

¹⁶ (Park 2018).

¹⁷ "Voice 5", *Collection*, p. 40.

¹⁸ 아무것도 더한 것이 없는 순전히 어머니에게 난 난대로 있는 사람.

¹⁹ A common objective of the writings of Wilhelm Dilthey and Ham Sok Hon is to find an underlying principle of the physical manifestations of human will through the activity of observation, reflection, and

specifically to deepen our feeling, and help broaden our explanatory ground in relation to cosmopolitan community, rather than to bring specific policy ideas or strategies, and it intends to bring metaphysical language back to our political discussions.

interpretation to try to find or establish a coherence, continuity, stability, and predictability of life events. Their projects are not intended to provide objective solutions to human problems but ways to understand how we engage in the world through meaning-making process. See (Dilthey et al. 1989) Dilthey, Wilhelm, Rudolf A. Makkreel, and Frithjof Rodi. 1989. *Introduction to the Human Sciences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. For my point on Dilthey's objective to find the principle of life, See (Iryna 2018, p. 164).

3.2.1. Saengmyŏng (生命, Life) as the Inner Principle and the Agent

The first insight is about the agent. The basic unit or agent of most cosmopolitan theories is a socio-political one. This understanding derives from the discussion of human conditions, desires and abilities, particularly in relation to the state of nature. While engaging in political processes with fellow humans, whether in a primitive or advanced society, we are normally rational, calculative, and utilitarian. Although we often find ourselves caring about others, our self-interest is always the reference point because, at least in the political discourse, the whole rational process emerges from the presupposition of a separated, distanced, individual agent or unit constantly seeking security and survival.²⁰

However, according to Ham, the basic unit or agent for any political project and community must be the *ssial*,²¹ which should be distinguished from the traditional socio-political agent. He argues that we, as the agent, need to come down to a deeper level than that of the rational and utilitarian agent, in thinking about a true, enlarged sense of community. The deeper level is the level of *saengmyŏng*, life, which is the inner principle, source, and force of *ssial*. It is similar to the pre-reflective stage of being, which Novalis, an early German romantic poet, articulated precedes the stage of the Kantian rational self: the stage in which an external, social persona has not yet been built (Kim 2009). This stage or concept of *saengmyŏng*, which I believe is often used as an interchangeable name for the *ssial* in Ham's literature, although with more metaphysical nuances, refers to the fullest ontological potential of the people and the purest state of their mind. It is not only a perspective and feeling of, but also an intention toward, *t'aja* (他者, the other). While Ham used the term *ssial* particularly for concerns about society, he did not necessarily have in mind a political goal or direction when using the term *saengmyŏng*. He rather wanted us to feel the metaphysically shared identity, which is supposed to manifest in an ontological *man'gae* (滿開 full bloom). Every *saengmyŏng* is destined to be nurtured, grow, and blossom, with other *saengmyŏngs* surrounding it. While the discussion of the *ssial* awakening involves the situation of the powerless and intends to make social progress, the blossom of *saengmyŏng* leads to a change in our inner perspective of the other and the world and inspires and guides the direction of the *ssial*. Although these two concepts are interrelated, *saengmyŏng* precedes *ssial*. The consciousness of *saengmyŏng* embodies the identity of the *ssial* and pushes the *ssial* to engage in political reality. The *ssial* are thus people with the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, who manifest their universal identity and goal particularly in social situations. Due to the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, the mindset of the *ssial* is not constrained by institutional frames and artificial rules. This idea of *saengmyŏng* has long been studied and interpreted around three main themes: *sŏsŭroham* (스스로함, self-reliance), *t'ongilsŏng* (統一性, unity), and *konan* (苦難, suffering) (Han 2016, p. 3).

Inspired and guided by three themes of *saengmyeong*, though I will not reiterate them in this paper, I will argue that Ham's *ssial* philosophy presents a better understanding of agency and offers a deeper ground for the sense of community than those of the traditional cosmopolitan theories. People, as the agents of *saengmyŏng*, which Ham called the *ssial* for political reasons, are not confrontational, destructive, or chaotic because their desire to live, connect, and grow with other lives neither comes from, nor is constrained by, a territory or a territorial mindset. This contrasts with the social agent, who is bound and controlled by the ambition of inanimate and insensitive institutional entities deeply rooted in geographical and ideological boundaries and their justified parochial agendas. The social agent's motive and action are quite often shallow and fragile, compared with

²⁰ "Voice 2", *Collection*, p. 360. Ham argues that the underlying reason for the establishment of the state is to seek security from thieves.

²¹ Ham regards a *ssial* as the basic unit of society, comparing it to a cell of an organism. See Ham, "Meaning", *Collection*, p. 241. "왜 알자를 썼나 그러면 세포를 살아이라 그래요. 세포를 번역할 때 살아이라 그러면 좋겠다 선생님(유영모)이 그래요. 그런 의미로 이것도 씨알이라고 한거예요. 씨는 물론 사람의 씨, 그래 씨알이라 그런다는 거예요." "The reason why the character, *al*, was used was because the cell is the living seed. My teacher himself thought that the living seed was the best translation for the cell. From that meaning did the term *ssial* come. Seed is the seed of the humans. That's the way *ssial* was used."

those of *saengmyŏng*. All living things, as *saengmyŏng*, are meant to grow and flourish together, and they are all interrelated, as understood in the Buddhist enlightenment of *pratityasamutpada* (dependent origination).²² If we are awakened to and accepting the universal ground of *saengmyŏng*, we cannot help but love and cooperate with each other. For example, Jesus' divine imperative, love your enemy, is always perceived as an impossible task, because we easily lose our focus on him being *saengmyŏng*. We cannot live with Samaritans, tax collectors, lepers, and prostitutes if we lose our focus on the common ground of human identity, *saengmyŏng*. If we lost our focus on *saengmyŏng*, we could never understand Mencius' teaching of compassion regarding our natural impulse to save a child in danger of falling into a well.²³ Nor could we understand the benevolence of Dirk Willems, a Dutch martyred Anabaptist, who is famous for helping a drowning pursuer and being martyred by his altruistic act.²⁴ Of course, the agent's awareness of their identity as *saengmyŏng* would not bring a specific set of political laws and policies. Nor would it suggest an ideal form of political institution. However, it would offer the political agent a stronger reason and a profound sense of purpose as to why we ought to connect with *the other* and build a cosmopolitan community.

Let me take a step further in making my point clearer. The consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, life, lays a deeper and wider ground for cosmopolitanism than that of the traditional theories. Ham believed that in the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, our identity based on socio-political, cultural and even religious dimensions are dissolved. There is no Korean, no Christian, and no human in *saengmyŏng*. This notion demands no boundary. The expansion or evolution of his thoughts on people in his writings shows a gradual dissolution of boundaries. When his magnum opus, *Queen of Suffering, A Spiritual History of Korea* (뜻으로 본 한국역사), was written in the 1930s, which came from a series of columns for *Sŏngsŏjosŏn* (聖書朝鮮, *Biblical Chosŏn*), the original book title in Korean was *A Biblical View of Korean History* (성서로 본 조선 역사). At this time, his *ssial* philosophy was yet to be developed. Ham primarily concerned about his people, Koreans, and their stories when reading the Bible. At the time, his notion of Koreans was closer to the *minjung* of the Korean liberation theology than to the *ssial*. The *minjung* are the masses that are highly contextualized in its definition and soteriology. The concept of the *ssial* that Ham developed later, probably after the 1950s, transcended this limit of contextuality. He transcended nation, race, and religion. He believed that the *ssial* identity formed out of the consciousness of life, *saengmyŏng*, not the consciousness of *minjung*, liberates people from the contextual or territorial reading of the world. It broadened the notion of *ssial* from the suffering Korean people into that of all people on Earth. In the volume 4 of *Voice of the People*, Ham explicitly called himself a *segyejuŭija* (世界主義者, cosmopolitan), not a nationalist.²⁵ His new approach to Biblical narratives and justice reminds us of the inspirational quote from Reverend King: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."²⁶

This notion of *ssial*, anchored in the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, offers three meaningful principles to formulate a good concept of agency for cosmopolitanism. Firstly, Ham believed that *saengmyŏng* innately seeks harmony with the surroundings. Harmony is to see the self as a whole. It means to see the self *in* and *through* the whole. Ham called it *chohwa* (調和, harmony). The beauty that harmony brings is not about what is in it but what it manifests. It means that not only do individual parts coordinate well with each other, but they also go well with the background. The whole generated by individual parts is not an isolated outcome; it is something that functions to redefine

²² Dependent Origination is one of the key concepts that support the larger Buddhist idea of emptiness and soteriology. According to ZALTA, the idea of *pratityasamutpada* also offers a deep philosophical foundation of compassion and nonviolence. "There is nothing in this world that is independent of everything else". All things and phenomena are interrelated and they affect each other particularly in ontological causality. See (ZALTA 2016) ZALTA Anja. Contribution of Buddhist Mindfulness to the Transformation of Conflicts-Dependent Origination (*paticca-samuppada*) and Deconstruction of Identity. *Asian Studies* 4: 2.

²³ (Mencius 2005, p. 35).

²⁴ (Oyer 1990, pp. 36–37).

²⁵ "Voice 4", *Collection*, p. 18. "나는 민족주의는 아닙니다. 세계주의입니다." "I am not a nationalist but a cosmopolitan."

²⁶ (King 2020).

and enhance the true value of the individual.²⁷ Ham said, “We are not able to understand the true value of an individual person simply through who he is. We get it by placing him in his social, historical, and cosmic background...Individuals are an artistic expression of the world” (*Chŏnjip* 5, p. 59).

In other words, the individual that is aware of and views themselves through the whole is the one that has the consciousness of *saengmyŏng* because *saengmyŏng* is the absolute, universal, natural principle of all living things. One’s *sincere awareness* of it necessarily comes to manifest in a social form and force. In Ham’s vision, the individual identity constructed by this *reciprocal subjectivity* (相互主體性) through the consciousness of *saengmyŏng* corrects the flaw of the *lone subjectivity* (獨主體性) of the contractual and rational individual because it is conscious of not only the *man’gae* (만개, blossom) of the individual but also of the whole (*Chŏnjip* 5, p. 59): the whole that exists beyond any political and economic boundaries. It is the whole formed out of people’s shared understanding of, belief in, and will for, *saengmyŏng*.

Secondly, the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, inspiring agency, has the principle and power to bind people in with common thread of a historical narrative. We are all engaging in creative work on history. History is more than records of past events. It helps people reflect and evaluate memories, preserve lessons from it, and have a sense of community with a shared boundary. History can be written in multi-layers: the history of a family, the history of a tribe, the history of a country, etc. While geography and genealogy offer only a history for the community with boundaries, the consciousness of *saengmyŏng* makes boundaries recede. It invites all living beings as a single organic entity, which Park called *yugich’ejŏk chŏnilch’e* (有機的 全一體, organic unity) (Park 2005, p. 187). Ham envisioned the history of humanity, which all individuals participate in writing as *saengmyŏng*. It is the history to grow and live, not to regress and die. Ham went so far as to identify history itself with *saengmyŏng*. For him, “History is the path that *saengmyŏng* takes.” “There is no history where there is no *saengmyŏng*” (*World History*, p. 38).²⁸ He believed that the awareness of *saengmyŏng* enlarges our perspective on *the other* as the agent and gives us the power to unite with them because it is the history of *saengmyŏng* that underlies all individual histories. Ham stated that “Whether the history of people, the history of culture, the history of nature, or the history of humanity, there always flows, underneath, the history of the great *saengmyŏng*” (*World History*, p. 49).

Thirdly, the consciousness of *saengmyŏng* arouses an upward movement of the mind. It means a progression of our mind and will from the concern about material survival and success to the concern about finding the spiritual origin of *insaeng* (人生, human life). Becoming aware of our *ssial* identity through the consciousness of *saengmyŏng*, we come to realize that the destiny of our life does not lie in the physical dimension. Ham said that “What makes *saengmyŏng saengmyŏng* is not what is material...While seemingly attached to the material, *saengmyŏng* denies and engulfs it.” “The material world became possible because of its underlying spiritual *saengmyŏng* and *ttŭt* (뜻, meaning or logos),”²⁹ according to Ham. It means that the acknowledgement process of our *saengmyŏng* identity will lead to a noble journey. It is the journey to find the place where we originally came from. This journey is to find not only the cradle of our being, but also the *telos* that we have to run toward. According to Kim (2016, p. 151), this *telos* is something that is realized through the exquisite dynamic of the Augustinian notion of time, in which *chronos* (the earthly time) is guided by *kairos* (the godly time). Ham said, “What is sublime about *saengmyŏng* is the fact that *saengmyŏng* blasted off from the creator returns to him by breaking the eternal walls” (*Chŏnjip* 2, p. 68).³⁰ This means that we rediscover our original nature, which is spiritual, universal, and cosmic, and restore the Garden of Eden here on Earth. These two tasks become possible as our *chŏngsin* (精神, mind/spirit) progresses upward. The mind of the *saengmyŏng*-awoken people evolves from the consciousness for physical functioning to the conscience for moral functioning and eventually to the feeling of transcendence for

²⁷ “Voice 8”, *Collection*, p. 4.

²⁸ Sok Hon Ham, “World History through Meanings” (뜻으로 본 세계역사, hereafter *World History*), *Collection*, p. 38.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102. See also (Park 2005).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

spiritual functioning. Taking off all of our social, political and cultural labels to recognize ourselves as *saengmyŏng*, we find the common narrative and force of life, which is to live, grow, and connect with all surroundings. It allows us to cognitively maximize our possibility as the agent to build a community of humanity.

3.2.2. Religion and Politics for the Ipch'ejök In'gan (立體的人間, Multi-Dimensional Humans)

The second insight is about our view of human nature. According to Ham's *ssial* philosophy, most of our political views are not grounded in a sound anthropology. They create a serious obstacle to our journey to a cosmopolitan project. The problem that Ham found is as follows: in the political discourse, humans are normally considered two-dimensional—the physical and the rational/mental. They are *saengmulchök* (生物的, biological) and *in'ganjök* (人間的, human), respectively.³¹ We are biological entities living and dying by responding to both internal and external physical stimuli. We are also the intelligent and rational agent able to engage in a communal relationship with *the other* by mutually creating meanings, values, and morality. These two-dimensional faculties explain in what capacity humans are superior to other beings and how they become socially meaningful and useful to each other. While physicality reflects our unceasing drive for survival and success, the rational faculty represents our cognitive ability to discern right from wrong and the beneficial from the harmful. Both faculties are fundamental to establishing a political community. However, there are limits to these two-dimensional faculties. Physical wellbeing does not guarantee peace of mind. According to Ham, "Reason does not allow us to know everything. Nor does it bring us the utmost value" (*World History*, p. 3). They cannot fully explain through what process humans come to embrace *the other*, particularly for a cosmopolitan cause, to the extent that they would willingly give up some of their rights, even with no expectation of reward or benefit. Nor can they satisfactorily explain what part of human nature triggers our physical body to take a particular political action.

Ham believed that the human agent should be understood multi-dimensionally (*ipch'ejögŭro*) particularly for the establishment of a larger scale community such as a cosmopolitan community. It is a *ch'oin'ganjök* (超人間的, superhuman) aspect.³² He focuses on the power of transcendence, in human nature, that emanates our ontological energy and potential in two different directions: *vertical* and *horizontal*. According to Ham, what physicality and reason do for life is primarily move in the horizontal direction. This means that it is our inner desire or divine inclination that keeps pushing us to get away from individuality and reach out to fellow humans to respond to the constantly evolving sense of self. Stating that the goal or ideal of politics is *p'yŏng* (平, to level) and *chŏngya* (正也, to straighten out),³³ Ham identifies this horizontal movement and expansion alongside our political desire and activities to connect and compromise with other humans. In the meantime, what occurs in the vertical direction is personal, spiritual growth.³⁴ This vertical movement precedes the horizontal movement.³⁵ Our inherent desire to go beyond translates into spiritual activities to deepen our awareness of the divine origin of life. These two patterns of movement are proportional to each other in expansion. Where the growth of our awareness and consciousness of the divine origin of life stops, the expansion of our political community and tolerance stops. As articulated in the discussion of *saengmyŏng*, the divine origin of life refers to our universal identity as *ssial* and our universal capability to connect with others. Ham developed this divine origin as part of *chŏnirhwa kwajŏng* (全一化 過程, the process of whole into one). He explained:

³¹ "Voice 7", *Collection*, p. 18.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ "Prospect for a New Era (새 시대의 전망)", *Collection*, p. 82.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ For the priority of the vertical movement, Ham uses a quote from the Great Learning. Quoting "*muryubonmal sayujongsi* (물유본말 사유종시, 物有本末 事有終始)," Ham states that the transformation for the mind should precede any change in material conditions that we intend. See *Warring Pacifist* (싸우는 평화주의자, *Pacifist* hereafter), *Collection*. 353.

그러나 다 는 필연적으로 일—을 예상한다. 그러므로 다가 있는 곳에 일 이 있다. 진화의 이 과정은 복잡화인 동시에 통일에 향하는 노력이다. 복잡한 만물 사이에는 유기적인 관련이 있음을 부정할 수 없고 더구나 이는 인류에 의한 의식생활의 시작에 의하여 한층 더 앞선다. 복잡화가 밖에 향하는 발산이라면 일화 —화는 안에 향하는 수렴收斂이다. 그러므로 진화가 나가면 나갈수록 생명현상의 내면화는 필연적이다. 정신현상은 물질현상의 복잡화에 의하여 우연히 일어난 것이라 하는 것은 천박한 의견이다. 진화의 과정이 다화多化와 일화—화의 교류라고 하면 물질과 정신이 일체를 이루는 것은 당연한 일이다.³⁶

However, multiplicity anticipates singularity. Singularity is anywhere multiplicity is. The evolutionary process is very complex; it is the (nature's) effort toward unity. It cannot be denied that in the complication of all things are organic relations, which are further expanded by the development of the human beings' livelihood. While this complication is the outward manifestation (of *saengmyǒng*), unification (or desire to unite) is the inward cultivation. Thus, as evolution proceeds, the internalization of the phenomena of *saengmyǒng* is inevitable. It is superficial to think that spiritual/mental phenomena are caused accidentally by the complication of the material phenomena. If the evolutionary process is the communication between multiplicity and unification, it is natural that the material and the spiritual ultimately become united.

In other words, the more we deepen the awareness of our divine origin and interconnectedness, the larger the size of our community will become. This means that the potential of the body/mind and the spirit have to co-arise and coincide. Ham said that "Since the relationship between politics and religion is not in a parallel but stepwise, multi-/cross-dimensional, and organic motion, there is no conflict. There are rather live unity and cohabitation" (*Those Who Think Live*, 181).³⁷ What Ham is trying to argue here with this multi-dimensional view of humans is that the cosmopolitan community cannot be established without the spiritual enlightenment of humans, because politics is simply an institutional expression of our spiritual and mental disposition toward each other (*Pacifist*, pp. 231–281). To build a stable political community, society demands greater morality. Greater morality cannot be possible without greater religiosity (*World History*, p. 186). Therefore, since spiritual growth is proportionally related to the political intelligence and ability, the *civitas terrena* and the *civitas dei* should go hand in hand.³⁸ Our political culture, with the separation of church and state, should not be the final stage in the evolution of politics. It is rather the penultimate stage among five different stages of political history that Ham articulated in the early 1970s: (1) religion-only society, (2) religion versus politics society, (3) religion-dominant society, (4) politics-dominant society and (5) religion–politics convergent society.³⁹ Ham did not envision religious politicians in the final stage such as Moses of Judaism or the Prophet Muhammad of Islam. Nor did he imagine a future state without religion.⁴⁰ He was thinking of the political agent whose political imagination is, constantly inspired by his awareness of the cosmic identity as the *ssial*, and concretized into policies and institutions so far as to embrace all people with dignity and respect. Therefore, establishing a larger community than our conventional state, such as a cosmopolitan community, is a spiritual task. It is a natural political consequence of the enlightenment of our multi-dimensional human nature.

³⁶ "World History", p. 95.

³⁷ Sok Hon Ham, "Only Those Who Think Live (생각하는 백성이라야 산다)", *Collection*, p. 181. "그것은 정신과 육체의 관계, 종교와 정치와의 관계는 평면적으로 나란히 있는 것이 아니요 계단적으로 입체적으로 혹은 유기적으로 되어 있는 것이기 때문에 아무 충돌이 없을 뿐 아니라 도리어 산 통일을 가져 둘이다 살게 된다." "Since the relationships between mind and body and between religion and politics are not in parallel but stepwise, cross-dimensional, and organic, not only is there no conflict but they both come to live by uniting."

³⁸ (Clark 2015) Clark, Mary T. 2015. Augustine on Justice. In *Augustine and Social Justice*, ed. Teresa Delgado, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth. Lanham: Lexington, pp. 3–10. Each city is separate. However, the public order of just transaction, which is politics in nature, cannot be possible without just men rightly related to God, which presumes spiritual maturity. See also (Henry 1984, p. 410) and (O'Daly 2009, p. 410).

³⁹ Sok Hon Ham, "On a Road of the World (세계의 한 길 위에서)", *Collection*, p. 117.

⁴⁰ Sok Hon Ham, "Unended Lecture (끝나지 않은 강연)", *Collection*, p. 421.

3.2.3. Narrative and Memory as the Driving Force

The last insight is about the power of a shared story and memory. Ham's *ssial* philosophy also helps us reconsider our conventional understanding of the driving force to evoke a sense of community and solidarity. What brings a clear notion of community, particularly in establishing a political entity, is usually a strong ideology, leadership, or institutional power, along with a stable territory. People gather and work together for a common ideal that they want to protect, preserve, and prosper. The level of their commitment to the ideal depends on the level of their identification with it. For example, religious martyrs boldly sacrifice as they closely identify themselves with their faith. Soldiers are willing to die in battlefields as they closely identify themselves with their countries. Empathy emerging from this ontological and emotional closeness or connection becomes a driving force to create and enhance the sense of community; it is the foundational feeling for the solidarity of community. According to James Coan (Bergland 2013), "With familiarity, other people become part of ourselves." He continues, "Our self comes to include the people we feel close to."⁴¹ It means that we tend to think that what we feel close to us is part of ourselves. Ham was clearly aware of this power of empathy in building a human community; he believed that empathy could be maximized when people come to have a shared narrative of life.

What I mean by the shared narrative of life is the narrative of *ssial*. Some narratives through which we find a sense of community with each other come from political, economic, or cultural goals and values; they do have the power to move people. However, the amount and depth of the empathy that they produce is superficial and weak. They do not normally push people to go beyond the drawn boundary because politics and culture work in a geographical territory and economy works in a conceptual territory for profit-making competition. However, the story of the *ssial* does not have a territorial constraint. It is present in the heart, mind and will of every oppressed individual and every individual enlightened of the *ssial*; it helps people, as Flanagan argues, in terms of the narrative and form of their personal identity, gives a deeper sense of direction, and empowers them to work for it (Flanagan 1992, p. 198). Constructed by the negative conditions of people in the bottom of the social ladder, the narrative of *ssial* arouses positive spirit and brings a stronger and larger sense of community. The negative conditions could be the absence of power, wealth, rights, and justice. People in these conditions qualify as the *ssial* not because they are the lowest caste in the social system, but because they are the people who closely feel the necessity and urgency of the dignity of life and because they are the people who experience what it means to be placed in the state of nature or the Rawlsian original position. Just as people in the state of nature and the original position are believed to remain equal to each other in capacity and elementary in social status because these conditions are the most foundational in starting a social interaction and community, the *ssial* with the shared narratives and memories, particularly of powerlessness, would help them envisage a better community with more compassion, understanding, and thoughtfulness.⁴² Ham says, "It is not the one that kills others but the one that dies well will save all (남을 죽이는 자가 살 것 아니라 스스로 잘 죽는

⁴¹ (Samarrai 2013).

⁴² The common denominator of the classical contractarian concept of the state of nature and Rawl's original position is the precondition of equality and fairness particularly in engaging in any social interaction. As hypothetical frameworks, both concepts suggest a common ground on which just political relation and community can be imagined and established. The core of their common ground is reason and rationality. Whether Hobbesian, Lockean, or Rawlsian, one must go through rational calculation, in thinking about a relation with others, where he or she stands, what capabilities he or she has, and finally how to maximize his or her interest. Reason is not only the epistemological foundation of the political agent to think of the possibility of community but also the instrument to lead to a civil society. Although accepting the significance of reason, Ham's philosophy suggests the consciousness of *saengmyōng* as the ground of political community. For Ham, reason is problematic. Reason as capacity is universal but it is, in practice, still subject to becoming divisive, parochial, and even manipulative particularly in political dimension due to its frequent ties to the norms of a society. For Ham, spiritual awakening accompanying character transformation is the starting point of a political vision and the foundation and instrument to render other natural and socio-political conditions beneficial for all.

자가 저와 남을 다 살릴 것이다” (*Human Revolution*, p. 104). Park says, “The *ssial* or *minjung* without power and wealth are the one that preserves the original, pure nature of *saengmyŏng*” (Park 2005, p. 44). In other words, if one has never hit rock bottom, not just in the social dimension but in the emotional and spiritual dimension, he would not be able to fully understand what it means to be left alone in the wilderness, also called the state of nature, in which he would feel most vulnerable but most equal at the same time. The experience of rock bottom in terms of life and society is both a reminder of our divine origin and a medium through which to connect with others who are pure of heart.⁴³ From this state of nature, which is the state of *saengmyŏng* for Ham, the common narrative is told and a positive spirit to connect, grow, and prosper with others is generated.

For instance, *ssial*-awoken South Koreans would better love and embrace suffering North Korean *ssials* because they are free from strategic concerns of the cold-hearted government-enslaved statisticians and bureaucrats in the diplomatic battlefield and because they know exactly, through their own political memory, what it would feel like to live under a dictatorship. The story of North Korean defectors experiencing contempt and discrimination in South Korea would resonate with the memory of the *am ha'aretz*, who were despised as boorish and ignorant by the Jewish haves and elite during the kingdom of Judah. Likewise, illegal immigrants or the underprivileged in Europe and America, who have had the experience of *ssial*, would better help Syrian refugees because the agendas of the haves, such as the geopolitical calculation for the balance of power and the interests of the arms industry in the Middle East, would not restrain their genuine compassion for the displaced and the poor. The Korean *minjung* of the 1970s and 80s who were suffering from political oppression by military dictators and economic exploitation by rapacious conglomerates would have easily empathized with the narrative of their contemporary Arab and Southeast Asian *minjungs*, who had to fight their own structural evils, because they both shared the narrative of the *ochlos*.⁴⁴ Similarly, Muslim Uyghurs in China, African Americans of the Black Lives Matter movement, Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Muslim women suffering an ultra-orthodox version of sharia would understand the agony of the oppressed and the deprived from any place because they are living a common narrative. Thus, the *ssial* are the ones that hear the cry of the sufferers and the oppressed most clearly because they themselves experience and share the common plight and the common feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, because they themselves are struggling with injustice. While the haves, the elite, and the powerful analyze the suffering of the people in a distant place, mainly to protect or expand their wealth and power, the *ssial* feel deeply and closely connected and united with other sufferers through their shared narratives, as they endure the same ordeal.

Therefore, the *ssial* feel strongly connected with each other not through their nationality, race, or economic interests but through their common fate and memories of suffering and injustice and their fundamental desire for life. It should be the people enlightened about *ssial* that build a world community. This building process is called *chŏnirhwa kwajŏng* (全一化 過程, the process of whole into one), in which the whole is psychologically and spiritually internalized within the individual and eventually actualized into a social reality (Kim 2009). The world community as *ssial kongdongch'e* (씨알 共同體, *ssial* community) would not need a geographical boundary, nor would it need a political ideology or representation. It is a community of humanity and life in which people would not feel the necessity of competition and conflict anymore, but would feel the divine imperative of coexistence and co-prosperity.

4. Conclusions

The *ssial* philosophy, which is both metaphysical and socio-political, shows not only Ham's deep-seated concern about people's enlightenment to become active agents for social progress, but also the ethical relevance of this in relation to the new moral context of the 21st century. It naturally led Ham to a progressive idea of *segyejuŭi* (世界主義, cosmopolitanism),⁴⁵ which did not receive

⁴³ (Jeon 2013, p. 119).

⁴⁴ “Meaning”, *Collection*, pp. 246–78.

⁴⁵ “Voice 1”, *Collection*, pp. 25–26.

considerable attention during his time, but which has become meaningful and inspirational in the present. During his time, the incessant unrest of domestic politics in Korea, to which most public attention was drawn, and the factionalism that was prevalent in the intellectual community of Korea, particularly with regard to the efficacy between militant activism and nonviolence, unfortunately made his thoughts sound naïve and disconnected. However, I believe that his *ssial* philosophy and anthropology, presented through three insights in this paper, suggest a more fundamental grounding of the world community and contain valuable perspectives on the preconditions of establishing one. Ham found, in the nature of *ssial*, a significant universal essence, *saengmyŏng*. He believed that a keen awareness of *ssial* would foster a common understanding and desire for justice, which would further develop into the foundational spirit of cosmopolitan community. This awareness would help liberate people from the parochial mindset generating corrupt statist behavior and excessive materialism, and suggest a more positive political vision in which the individual *ssial* would purposefully work for a fully blossomed life through mutually respecting and cooperating with others.

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