

HOLY SPIRIT MOVEMENTS IN KOREA — PATERNAL OR MATERNAL? REFLECTIONS ON THE ANALYSIS OF RYU TONG-SHIK (YU TONG-SHIK)

Kirsteen Kim

Abstract: Korean Christianity is known around the world for its amazing growth and dynamism, and this includes a thriving theological life, much of which is inaccessible without knowledge of the Korean language. Ryu Tong-Shik (Yu Tong-shik) was one of the first Koreans to attempt to trace the development of Korean theology in his seminal work, *Han'guk shinhak-üi kwangmaek* (The Mineral Veins of Korean Theology; first published 1982). This paper introduces Ryu's theological thought and investigates a particular observation he makes about two distinct patterns of Holy Spirit movement in the Korean church, which he designates 'paternal' and 'maternal' and identifies both before and after the liberation from Japan in 1945. The paper examines the grounds of Ryu's claim, which derive from the religious history of Korea, and suggests the relevance of this schema to other societies and to pneumatological reflection in general.

Only 130 years¹ since the 'hermit kingdom' first opened its doors to Western influence, estimates of the proportion of Christians in South Korea range from 26% of the population, according to the CIA, to 41% in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.² The latter figure is almost certainly over optimistic; however, even in the lower case, this is the largest Christian percentile of any country in Asia apart from Georgia and the Philippines. Korean Christianity is known around the world for its amazing growth and dynamism, and this includes a thriving theological life, much of which is unfortunately inaccessible without knowledge of the Korean language. The aim of this paper is, first, to introduce Korean Christian theology to make it more widely known and, secondly, to investigate a particular observation about movements

¹ This paper was first presented at the Henry Martyn Centre, Cambridge on 24 November 2005. Unless otherwise indicated, translations from Korean are by the author. The McCune-Reischauer system has been used for transliteration of Korean names and terms; however, where there is a different transliteration in common use, this is given first.

² Website *The World Factbook*, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ks.html> [16/12/05]; David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, second edition, Volume 1: The world by countries: religionists, churches, ministries, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 682.

of the Holy Spirit in Korea. The paper is written in the belief that, since Western missionaries first inspired Koreans to believe, then Korean Christians can, in turn, inspire Western Christians by their faith. This reciprocity of giving and receiving properly characterises the worldwide body of Jesus Christ.

The Mineral Veins of Korean Theology

The window chosen on Korean Christian theology is the work of Ryu Tong-Shik (Yu Tong-shik), one of the first Koreans to attempt to trace its development; though it must be said at the outset that it is Protestant theology that he has in mind. In particular, this paper is based on his book, *The Mineral Veins of Korean Theology*, published in 1982.³ This was not the first attempt at an overview of Korean theology,⁴ however Ryu pioneered an historical framework of theological development that has been generally adopted since. What is more, his is a seminal work that has inspired further reflection on how Korean experience has shaped Christian thought and so it is frequently quoted. This paper also refers to two other introductions to Korean Protestant theology, Chai-yong Choo (Chu Chae-yong), *A History of Christian Theology in Korea*⁵ and Han Sung-hong, *Streams of Korean Theological Thought*.⁶ All three are only available in Korean. There is a useful overview of Korean theology — both Protestant and Catholic — in English in the third volume of the guide to Asian Christian theologies edited by John C. England and others.⁷

Ryu (b 1922), is a Methodist minister and professor emeritus of the prestigious Yonsei University in Seoul. He taught theology there and before that at Korea Methodist Theological Seminary, his *alma mater*. He also studied at Boston School of Theology (USA), the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, and received his doctoral degree from Kokugaku University in Japan. Ryu has developed a particular interest in the interface between Christianity and Korean religions and culture.

³ Yu Tong-shik, *Han'guk shinhak-üi kwangnaek* rvsd edn, Seoul: Tasan Kulbang 2000 (first published 1982).

⁴ Yun, Sung-bum's *Korean theology*, Seoul: Sunmyungmunwhasa was published (in Korean) in 1972.

⁵ *Han'guk krisdo-gyo shinhak-sa*, Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea 1998.

⁶ *Hang'guk-shinhak-sasang-üi hürim* 2 vols., Seoul: Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary Press 1996.

⁷ John C. England et al., *Asian Christian theologies: a research guide to authors, movements, sources*, vol. 3: Northeast Asia, Delhi: ISPCK 2004, 475-651.

In an earlier influential work,⁸ he introduces Korean religions and discusses the encounter of Christianity with these traditions, showing how this religious heritage shaped the way Koreans received the gospel. In *The Mineral Veins*, Ryu builds on this in his concern to trace how Korean Christian theology emerges from the long subterranean strata of Korean culture that stretch back through at least 2000 years of recorded history and before that to the origins of the Korean people among the tribes of Central Asia.

Christianity is only one in a line of religious influences in this long history, which is traced back to the legendary foundation of Korea in 2333 BCE by Tan'gun. The primal Korean religion of spirit-worship, characterised by Shamanism,⁹ was supplanted by Buddhism in the fifth century. Buddhism was ousted by Confucianism in the fifteenth century, and in the twentieth century Christianity became the dominant religious force,¹⁰ though not the official religion of the nation. In order to elucidate Korean Christian theology, Ryu begins his book with an attempt to pinpoint certain basic elements that have persisted in the minds and hearts of the Korean people despite these religious changes. These foundational concepts he calls *han*, *môt* and *sam*. *Han* means one, not in an arithmetical sense but meaning the essential and the absolute. *Han* also means big or high and is used to name the sky and God, the Lord of Heaven. Furthermore, *han* is the name given to the Korean people and land and thus represents the faith of Koreans that they are the people of God. And so throughout history Koreans have worshipped to God as *Hanŭnim* or *Hananim*. *Môt* is the excitement that comes through rhythm; it also means natural harmony; it is the freedom that is evoked by inner strength and resources. *Môt* is used in a number of common phrases to represent the ideals and aesthetic sense of Koreans, which reached their height — in Ryu's view — in the Three Kingdoms period (4th-7th centuries CE) in particular the sixth-century philosophy of *P'ungnyu*. This represented a coming together of the primal religion, Confucianism and Buddhism in a flowering that is regarded as classical Korean culture. In this period, the finest young men were

⁸ Yu Tong-shik, *Han'guk Chong'gyo wa K'idok'kyo* (Tongshik Ryu, *The Christian faith encounters the religions of Korea*), Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2001 (first published 1965).

⁹ Korean Primal Religion should not be limited to Shamanism, though it includes this — James Huntley Grayson, *Korea — a religious history* rvsd edn, Abingdon, Oxon: RoutledgeCurzon 2002, 216.

¹⁰ Grayson, 2.

selected as *hwarang*, and were educated to be bodily fit and refined, to sing and dance for mutual enjoyment, and to appreciate their natural environment. *Sam* means life, not merely human and animal existence but culturally creative and productive life, life as “an abbreviation for personhood”.¹¹ Ryu believes these three basic concepts of God as one, freedom of artistic expression, and cultured life have endured through all the vicissitudes of Korean history, the introduction of other religions and the onslaught of modernity. They therefore represent the essential Korean spirit (*öl*) and are the source of Korean national development. Ryu uses a diagram to illustrate how the Korean spirit has been constant through all the different phases of the nation’s history.¹²

Before discussing the development of Korean Protestant theology, Ryu briefly considers the situation of Korea at the end of the nineteenth century, the time of its introduction. At this time Korea, which claimed an independent history stretching back 5,000 years, faced national ruin. Internal tensions had weakened the monarchy and administration, and from outside the country was threatened by foreign powers. The Korean nation, which had long kept itself isolated from the rest of the world, was in crisis and was being forced to open up to new powers. Both Japan and Russia had designs upon the peninsular, while its long-time protector China was weak. At this juncture, the traditional religions were not able to inspire the people. Confucianism, which was the official philosophy of government, appeared old-fashioned and offered little hope for meeting the desires of the reformers; Buddhism had not recovered after being ousted from power by the Confucians nearly five hundred years before, exiled to the countryside and labelled as corrupt; and Korean primal religion appeared primitive in the face of modernity.

Into this religious vacuum came three new movements. The first was Roman Catholicism, which began to be practised in Korea from the late eighteenth century onwards, brought by Koreans who had encountered it in China. This ‘western learning’ spread, particularly among certain disaffected branches of the upper classes. However, the influence of Catholicism was strongly resisted by successive governments, particularly because the Roman Catholic Church of that era condemned the ancestor veneration practices that were the foundation of Confucian social structure. There were several persecutions of what became an

¹¹ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 22.

¹² Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 28.

underground movement of the dispossessed; the last and most severe in 1866-67 when 8,000, a quarter of the Catholic population, were martyred. Even when Protestant missionary work was welcomed, the Catholic Church continued to be regarded with suspicion and remained marginalised until the 1970s. The second movement was *Tonghak*, or “eastern learning”, which was founded by Ch’oe Che’u (1824-64). Ch’oe drew on all the religious streams of Korean culture and also Roman Catholicism, though — as the name of his movement implies — he explicitly rejected the latter to form a synthesis of Asian religions with a shamanistic character. The combination of deteriorating conditions for the people and the revolutionary fervour of this new religious movement led in 1894 to a popular revolution. The same movement, known later as *Ch’ondo-gyo* or “Teachings of the Heavenly Way”, was active in opposing the Japanese colonial government in the independence movement of 1 March 1919.

The third religious movement to enter Korea in this critical period was Protestantism. The first Protestant missionaries arrived in 1894-95 from the United States, which was also the first Western nation to sign a treaty with Korea. From the start Protestantism was perceived as modern and therefore offered hope for national renewal by modernisation. The first missionaries were Presbyterian and Methodist, and these became the largest denominations in twentieth-century Korea. They began by setting up hospitals and schools and targeted the common people, especially women. The form of faith that they brought with them was in the North American revivalist tradition, which centred on preaching and prayer, and involved a call for personal holiness and an emotional response. The missionaries’ shared revival spirituality and conservative faith often overrode denominational differences. With restrictions on evangelism lifted, Protestantism grew astonishingly rapidly in the twentieth century and the church became indigenous relatively quickly. The reasons for this included the fact, that from the first, Koreans actively sought out Christianity and spread it themselves, and also the shared missionary policy (known in Korea as the Nevius method), which encouraged self-support, self-governance and self-propagation of local churches. The first Koreans were ordained to the ministry in 1907, with the Presbyterian Church of Korea being established in 1912 and the Korean Methodist Church in 1930.

The Flowering of Korean Christian Theology

Ryu goes on to map the development of Korean Protestant theology in three periods, reflecting the development of a flower from germination to blossoming. The first period, from the reception of Protestantism until the 1930s, he refers to as “the period of the quickening of Korean theology”. He mentions three founding fathers: first, Yun Ch’i-ho (1865-1945), an aristocrat who was motivated by the Christian gospel to progressive social involvement. Yun saw Christianity as offering hope for Korea to break free of the yoke of China and modernise. Controversially, in the light of later events, he favoured cooperation with the Japanese to reform Korea. In the same period, Ch’oi Byŏng-hŏn (1858-1927) attempted to promote religious freedom and acceptance of Christianity by relating it to the existing higher religions of Korea, Confucianism and Buddhism. He tried to show the relativity of all three of them, and yet how Christ is the fulfilment of all. The third founder-figure in Ryu’s analysis is Kil Sŏn-ju (1869-1935). Kil was one of the first ordained Korean ministers and the main Korean leader emerging from the revival movement that broke out in 1907, to which we will refer later. Theologically he was conservative; Ryu terms him “fundamentalist” like the missionaries. However, unlike the missionaries, Kil was not politically quietist and, after the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, he was one of the signatories to the famous Declaration of Independence of March 1, 1919, along with 14 other Christians, 15 leaders of *Ch’ŏndogyo* (*Tonghak*), and three Buddhists.

Ryu calls the second period from the 1930s through to the 1950s ‘the period of the establishment of Korean theology’. This was a period of enormous social and political change for Koreans. The later period of Japanese colonisation before the liberation in 1945 was very harsh, including a programme of Japanisation, the use and abuse of the people and their resources for the war effort, and attempts to force worship at the Shinto shrines. The celebration of liberation was short-lived because Russian and US forces could not agree a common regime for the peninsula, and so it became divided between North and South. The Korean War fought between 1950 and 1953 was devastating not only in its material destruction and the huge loss of human life but also because it divided a people who had been unified in one nation for more than 1300 years.

In this period tensions arose within the churches that led to splits in the Presbyterian Church (though the Methodist Church held together). It was a time of trial for Korean theology as it struggled to free itself

from the constraints of the conservative Western theology of the missionaries, to respond appropriately to the imposition of Shinto shrine worship, and to bridge the political gap between reformists and conservatives. In the Presbyterian Church these tensions led to three splits in the 1950s. From the 1930s onward, arguments centred on biblical interpretation eventually led to the Kijang group splitting away in 1953 following the excommunication of their leader, Kim Chae-chun, whom we shall mention again later. For Ryu the net result of these controversies is a three-fold foundation of Korean theology according to biblical hermeneutic: fundamentalist dogmatic, progressive historical, or liberal existential. Though Ryu does not mention them, it is worth recording here two other important splits in this decade. The Koshin Presbyterian denomination was formed in 1952 by those who rejected as leaders Christians who had, in their eyes, compromised the faith by bowing at the Shinto shrines. Resistance to ecumenical involvement produced the Hapdong denomination in 1959.

The period from the 1960s to the 1980s, which was the most recent for Ryu's work, he named 'the period of the unfolding of Korean theology'. Ryu regards Korean theology as 'bursting into bloom' in the 1960s and 70s. This was a period of rapid social change as the nation laboured to reconstruct itself after the Korean War and build an industrial base. Nation-building took place under harsh military rule, on the basis of national security, that suppressed human rights. However, most churches supported strong government, which they saw as necessary for national survival and growth, and this was also the most rapid period of church growth. Protest at governmental oppression and the churches' collusion with it led to the formation of a Korean form of liberation theology known as *minjung* theology. The search for a theology of religions also began in this period. As a result of this theological development, Ryu sees Korean theology as having three strands: a conservative theology centred on salvation movements, a progressive theology centred on socio-historical problems, and liberal thought centred on dialogue with other religions. However, Ryu believes that 'the true form of Korean theology, must be found in *p'ungnyu* theology', the theology of Korean culture, the combination of *han*, *môt* and *sam*, that Ryu himself outlines.¹³

Ryu closes his book by drawing attention to what he sees as the contemporary challenges to Korean theology: Western science and

¹³ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 357-358.

Eastern religions. However, the main interest of this article lies in the penultimate chapter of the book where Ryu discusses the Korean Church and the pattern of Holy Spirit movements. He identifies two distinct patterns, one linked with the revival movement led by Kil Sŏn-ju from 1907, which he calls 'paternal', and the other with the revival movement led by Lee Yong-do of 1928-33, which he calls 'maternal'. We will look at each of these in turn; but first it is important to say something about the role of revivals in Korean Christianity.

The Holy Spirit and the Korean Church

Ryu notes the generally accepted view that the Korean church came into being in a revival movement because by this means the masses were reached and Korean church growth began.¹⁴ From the outset, therefore, such revivals, which are regarded as movements of the Holy Spirit, have been essential to the nature of the Korean Protestant church. The first revival, which began in 1907 — shortly after the Korea was made a protectorate of Japan (1905), was initiated by the foreign missionaries in the sense that they committed themselves to pray for revival in the Korean church amid the situation of frustration and despair in the country in general. One of the missionaries, Dr Robert A. Hardie, a Methodist believed he had experienced a personal filling of the Holy Spirit through prayer and repentance, and he began to preach about this. The missionaries also heard through their networks of the Welsh Revival of 1904 and the Indian Revival of 1905 and hoped for a similar outpouring of the Spirit in Korea. However, the events, when they happened, clearly took the missionaries by surprise and the movement took on a momentum of its own beyond missionary control. It began at a Bible conference in Pyongyang of about 1500 Korean men organised by the missionaries and Korean leaders. Missionaries described the scene:

... the whole audience began to pray out loud, all together. The effect was indescribable. Not a confusion, but a vast harmony of sound and spirit, a mingling together of souls moved by an irresistible impulse to prayer. It sounded to me like the falling of many waters, an ocean of prayer beating against God's throne . . . As the prayer continued, a spirit of heaviness and sorrow came upon the audience. Over on one side, someone began to weep and, in a moment, the whole congregation was weeping . . . Man after man would rise, confess his sin, break

¹⁴ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 416.

down and weep, and then throw himself on the floor and beat the floor with his fists in a perfect agony of conviction.¹⁵

Participants began confessing their sins to one another, asking for forgiveness and making reparation for their sins to associates and neighbours. Those whose lives were changed testified in the wider community to what had happened, with the result that others were drawn in. From this time onwards, revival meetings became a regular feature of Korean Christianity and there were many such events.

The Paternal Holy Spirit Movement: The Third Age of the Spirit and Minjung Theology

Kil Sŏn-ju, newly ordained, emerged as the main Korean leader in the 1907 revival and continued to lead revival meetings across the country until his death in 1935. He became the originator of the dawn prayer meetings and repetitious Bible reading that are characteristic of Korean Christianity. Ryu portrays Kil's movement as Confucian, and therefore paternal, in its outlook. Confucianism is a philosophy for social harmony based on certain ancient texts and involving right behaviour, at the centre of which is the loyalty due from a son to his father. The main religious rituals of Confucianism are the ancestral rites, and they can only be performed by the men of the family. Paternalism is therefore difficult to escape and addressing God as Father is deeply ingrained among Korean Christians. There are also four other important aspects of the Confucian social order, which is described as the law of Heaven: obedience to rulers, subservience of wife to husband, respect for elders and loyalty in friendship. Though Ryu does not elaborate here, the continuity of Kil's theology with Confucian values is a common perception for three main reasons. Firstly, though born in poverty, Kil was raised in a strict Confucian home and shared Confucian concern for the national interest over and above the individual; this informed his preaching and also his political action. Though he actively dissuaded his fellow Christians from involvement in peasant uprisings, his sense of national duty led to his involvement in the dignified and peaceful March 1 independence movement of 1919. Secondly, like the Confucian literati, Kil was conservative in his theology and in his approach to the scriptures; the repetitious way in which

¹⁵ Quoted in Allen D. Clark, *A history of the church in Korea*, Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea 1971, 161-162.

he read the Bible was Confucian in style. Thirdly, the movement was Confucian in the sense that Kil advocated a disciplined and rather legalistic moral code for Christian living. In these last two aspects, the conservative theology and Puritanical ideas of many of the missionaries also had much in common with the rigid morality of the Confucians, and Kil's movement was consonant with missionary ideas about what Christian conversion should entail. Kil led a social movement concerned particularly with external behaviour that went down well with the elite of the ruling class and inspired national struggle against the oppressor.¹⁶

Ryu parallels Kil's revival with the *minjung* movement, which was similarly based around a theology developed by the elite that advocated a political struggle on behalf of the nation. *Minjung* theology arose in the 1970s, a decade of military dictatorship, rapid economic development and sudden growth in religious movements. Though the economic growth brought benefits for many, it also led to the social alienation of the poor or *minjung*. *Minjung* theology was a theology not of but rather for the poor by Christian intellectuals, who protested on their behalf. They were arrested and imprisoned as subversives. However in the long-run the movement was an important factor in bringing democratic reforms and ameliorating the workers' conditions. The reflections of these intellectuals on their experience led to a liberation theology that had worldwide influence through ecumenical channels.

The continuity between the 1907 revival and the *minjung* theology movement is not immediately obvious, particularly because the leaders of the first revival — Kil Sŏn-ju especially — shared the conservative theology and literal approach to biblical interpretation of the missionaries, whereas *minjung* theology has emerged from the more theologically liberal strands of the Korean church. However, as has been mentioned, Kil was also a signatory to the Declaration of Independence of 1 March 1919. *Minjung* theologians have pointed out that there was a disparity between the message as intended by the missionaries and as heard by Korean Christians in this period. The missionaries consciously promoted revival in order for Koreans to internalise their faith, and even to make peace with their Japanese aggressors. This was to prevent the church, as one of the few nationwide networks of Koreans, becoming a vehicle for political insurrection, which they felt would be

¹⁶ See Choo, 36-41; Han, 96-103.

a hopeless cause.¹⁷ The missionaries even credited Kil with preventing insurrection during the 1907 revival by directing the Christians instead to political quiescence.¹⁸ Nevertheless, judging by their involvement in independence and resistance movements, what Korean believers read in their Bibles was a message of political liberation. They also read the story of Israel as meaning that their own weakness was the cause of their slavery and so repentance of personal sin in the revival meetings was an important part of national recovery. Kim Yong-bock (Kim Yong-bŏk) has pointed out that the language of regeneration by the Holy Spirit of the early revival was directly connected by Korean Christians with the restoration of the nation.¹⁹ The Korean word for revival, *puhŭng* can also mean reconstruction, restoration and renaissance.

In their situation of national calamity and oppression by hostile ruling powers, Kil and others were particularly interested in the imagery of apocalyptic in the Bible, which encoded their feelings against the Japanese occupation. They saw themselves as living in the last age. Kil himself spent much time reflecting on the book of Revelation, and this led him to predict that the Messiah would return in 1974 and that the Heavenly Kingdom would be established in 2002.²⁰ In this connection, Ryu regards as highly significant for understanding the Korean church, the preface of the new-year issue 1931 of *Shinhak Chinam* (a theological publication). The writer (whose name Ryu does not give) takes up the division of history into three dispensations corresponding to persons of the Trinity, first suggested by Joachim of Fiore in the twelfth century, and applies it in a new way to Korea. He describes the first age as that of the 'church authority-centred religion' of the Roman Catholic Church, the second age is that of the 'Bible-centred religion' of Protestantism, and the third age of 'Spirit-centred religion' represents the passing of Christianity from the West to the East, and to Korea in particular. Ryu sees this proposal as important in that it arises as much from the revival history of the Korean church as it points to its future.²¹ He goes on to show how

¹⁷ Lak-Geoon George Paik, *The history of Protestant missions in Korea 1832-1910*, Seoul: Yonsei University Press 1970 (first published 1929), 369.

¹⁸ Paik, 416.

¹⁹ Kim Yong-Bock, 'Korean Christianity as a Messianic Movement of the People' in Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (ed.), *Minjung theology: people as the subjects of history*, London: Zed Press 1983, 80-119, see pp. 113-116.

²⁰ Kim Yong-Bock, 110.

²¹ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 414-415.

Suh Nam-dong (Sŏ Nam-dong; 1918-1984), who Ryu regards (with some justification) as the central figure of *minjung* theology, also used the three dispensations in his historical analysis. Beyond the first age of the law of the Old Testament and the second age of the church and the Testament to Jesus Christ, Suh believed the third age of the Spirit had arrived. He taught that the concrete liberation and salvation of the people of God recorded in the stories of the exodus and of the cross was being realised the political events of recent Korean history. By the power of the Spirit, the *minjung* were being awakened to bring about their own liberation and humanization, as evidenced by such events as the 1894 *Tonghak* rebellion, the 1919 independence movement, and the 1961 uprising that overthrew the postwar dictatorship of Syngman Rhee (Lee Sŭng-man).²² In Suh's "pneumatological synchronic interpretation",²³ in the Spirit the suffering Christ is at the same time the contemporary suffering *minjung* and the Jesus event is actualised here and now.

In this way, from the perspective of their view of history as the third age of the Spirit described in the revelation literature, Ryu concludes that *minjung* theology and the early faith movement of Kil Sŏn-ju emerge from the same vein of Korean theology; both are after the paternal-Confucian pattern of Holy Spirit movement. There is an implied criticism of *minjung* theology in this label; that is, it is an elitist movement that is seeking to change society for the people rather than with them. Because it does not emerge from the traditions of the people themselves, Ryu is worried that it is more about economics than human beings. He senses a rigidity of ideology that does not respond to the mood of the masses and is lacking in spirituality. Ryu's work is a challenge to *minjung* theologians to move from a socio-political approach to a religio-cosmic one.²⁴

The Maternal Holy Spirit Movement: The Power of the Holy Spirit and the Healing of the Minjung

After the 1919 independence movement was suppressed and the Japanese grip on Korea tightened so that social and political action became even more difficult, the revival meetings became more mystical in

²² Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 421.

²³ England et al., 556.

²⁴ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 437-38.

nature and more individualistic. Between 1928 and 1933 the preaching of a young revivalist called Lee Yong-do (1901-1933) swept the nation. Lee was a political activist who had been imprisoned by the Japanese several times. After being healed from illness in a miraculous way — a common pattern in the identification of leaders of Korean primal religion, he embraced what he came to regard as a true Christian life of penitence, prayer, thankfulness, love and hope, and turned from political protest to train for the ministry. In his first church he failed to assimilate with the local people and his harsh criticism of Communism incited opposition so, in accordance with Korean as well as biblical tradition, he went away to the mountains to pray. A 10-day fast changed him into a more prayerful man and at Christmas 1928 Lee saw what he had been praying for, a sacred vision of a heavenly flame, and what was interpreted to be the fire of the Holy Spirit descended on his church in the outbreak of revival. The revival spread and soon Lee was called on to lead gatherings across the country. He believed that by joining in Christ's sufferings, national and personal suffering could be overcome and turned to glory. In his meetings he encouraged crying and other emotional out-pouring and preached Christ's unconditional love and embrace as the only consolation of Koreans. Unlike the earlier revivalist Kil Sŏn-ju, Lee was highly critical of church leaders, whom he felt were constrained by the conservative theology inherited from the missionaries, and this meant that some church bodies outlawed him. He preached an individual, internalized spirituality involving spiritual warfare and personal piety.

According to Ryu, Lee's experience of imprisonment and torture led him to the conclusion that was no point in political action due to hopeless political situation. Any solution to the suffocating economic, social and cultural situation of Korea in this period could only lie in serving the spiritual Christ. Evoking the vision of Ezekiel of a valley of dry bones coming to life by the wind of God's Spirit, Lee invited Jesus to come to from Europe, where he was not needed, to Korea, where he would find his cross in the sufferings of the Korean people. He preached that by identifying with Jesus's sufferings, believers would experience his unlimited love and in this way exchange the sin and materialism of earth for the life and holiness of heaven. Lee also advocated engagement in a spiritual struggle against the devil, who he saw as responsible for all forms of greed out of which comes suffering, in order to overcome evil (an activity he described as 'victory over the devil', *sŭngma*). He called upon the name of Jesus in all situations and

adopted a kind of 'Jesus-ism' that was criticised by other church leaders. In Ryu's view, the success of Lee's movement was because it had much in common with the primordial values of Korean culture — *han*, *mōt* and *sam*. It was also in keeping with the character of Korean primal religion in that the experience of Christ's suffering and love which Lee preached does not take place in today's society but in some mystical union, so that his was an ahistorical and "spiritual" revival.

Ryu describes Lee's movement as maternal because primal religion is perceived as women's religion in Korea. Since the entry of the other religions, the old belief in the spirit world and the ancient ways of dealing with problems such as divination, fortune-telling, folk remedies and shamanistic exorcism have been kept alive in the home and family by the womenfolk, and often despised as superstition by the men. Also, in keeping with the separate roles of men and women, which persist in Korean society today, the husband is the 'outside person' who deals with public and 'weighty' matters of society and politics, whereas the wife is the 'inside person' whose concern is for the so-called 'lighter' matters of running the home and educating the children. Thus Ryu describes the paternal movement as outward-looking and socially oriented, and the maternal one as interior-focussed and individualistic.

The revival movement led by Lee has a post-Liberation parallel, in Ryu's view, in the Full Gospel Church of Cho Yong-gi, well known in the West as Paul or David Yonggi Cho. Both are popular movements; Lee's revival is credited with indigenising the faith in the emotions of the masses²⁵ and Cho's Pentecostal congregation in Seoul alone currently claims 760,000²⁶ members. Though Cho Yong-gi started the church in 1958, it was in the same decade of the 1970s that it came to the fore as a rapidly growing movement. Unlike the socially engaged but elitist *minjung* movement, Ryu describes how Cho's movement in the 1970s embraced the spirit of each person and offered strength and healing to the alienated and sick *minjung*. Whereas the paternal movements are conflictual in confronting injustice, Lee's and Cho's movements are therapeutic in their approach.

²⁵ Choo, 140.

²⁶ Figure given by Rev. Dr Hong Yonggi, President of the Institute for Church Growth, Hansei University and an ordained pastor of the Full Gospel Church at a press conference of the World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, May 2005.

Although in the theology of the Full Gospel Church (or the Pure Gospel Church, as it is known in Korea) Korean traditions are not explicitly drawn upon, since Ryu's work there have been many studies that point out shamanistic elements of its worship, leadership and message.²⁷ For example, the charismatic style of prayer and worship has parallels with the primal religion; like Lee and in the shaman tradition, Cho's call to the ministry was the result of miraculous healing from illness; both men encourage retreat to the mountains, where the ancient Koreans encountered Hananim, to pray; as in the primal religion, people are encouraged to come to the church with an expectation that their personal problems will be solved. The central message of the Full Gospel Church is the 'three-fold blessing', which is based on the verse 3 John 2. Cho's interpretation of this verse promises 'spiritual well-being', 'general well-being' and 'bodily health', the meaning of which is fully explained on the church website.²⁸ Spiritual well-being is the result of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, with the expectation that it is evidenced by the gift of tongues. This brings enhanced communication with God and the possibility of training the soul and controlling the greed of the body. General well-being refers to the expectation that, once the believer has received the Holy Spirit, not only will they have peace in their heart but all their worldly activities will prosper. Receiving material blessings and being successful in life is the result of cultivating the right attitudes of positive thinking, giving and vision. Divine healing is given to those who yearn for it, are free from sin, and pray for it in faith. Health is maintained by not falling into sin and releasing stress through unburdening oneself in prayer.

Ryu points out that the acquisition of such spiritual power is very attractive to people who are oppressed and powerless, and is itself salvation. The experience of the Holy Spirit is personal and experiential and leads to recovery of confidence and self-awareness. Furthermore, there is not only individual but also a corporate feeling of warmth as the congregation shouts 'Amen' or 'Hallelujah'. Here there is 'a place prepared for the estranged masses' and this, he believes, is the most important factor in the appeal of the Full Gospel Church.²⁹ In this respect, Cho's Holy Spirit movement performs an important pastoral

²⁷ One of the first is Boo-Woong Yoo, *Korean Pentecostalism: its history and theology*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang 1987.

²⁸ Website of the *Full Gospel Television*, <http://www.fgtv.com/> [accessed 05/11/05].

²⁹ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 425.

role for the *minjung*. However, he believes out that there are some major omissions in the gospel presented. It is a Holy Spirit movement without a Trinitarian God because it lacks a theology of creation, history, development of character, or judgment, with the result that the Holy Spirit is in danger of being reduced to the power of shamanism.³⁰ Ryu sees it is psychical rather than spiritual. It seems that, because of the linkage of the value of life with the pursuit of worldly gain, Cho's movement has not thrown off the values of the primal religion that are incompatible with Christian faith, and so Ryu concludes that there are both advantages and also limitations in the maternal Holy Spirit movement.

Ryu summarises that the Holy Spirit movements before the Liberation and those after it both divide into Confucian/paternal and Primal Religion/maternal forms, as shown by the contrasts in the following table.

Ryu Tong-Shik's Analysis of Holy Spirit Movements

<i>Paternal Holy Spirit movement</i>	<i>Maternal Holy Spirit movement</i>
Joachim of Fiore, third age	Pentecostal power
Confucian	Shamanistic
Kil Sŏn-ju, revival from 1907	Lee Yong-do, revival 1928-33
fundamentalist	mystical
external, social	internal, private
elite	masses
political fighting	political tolerance
<i>minjung</i> theology	full gospel theology
Suh Nam-dong, <i>minjung</i> theologian	Cho Yong'gi, Pentecostal leader
social change	healing

The movements in the two eras are not exactly parallel; they reflect the differing cultural contexts. Nevertheless, they fall into the same streams of paternal and maternal theology. Moreover, the earlier ones seek to meet the despair of that time and give hope for the future; whereas the later movements also share a common character of attending to the needs of the suffering *minjung*. However, he concludes, both these types of Holy Spirit movements have their strengths and weaknesses;

³⁰ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 425.

though they disagree in certain aspects, they also share certain others; and, practically, they are both important pillars of the one faith movement of the Korean church. Therefore, rather than try and eliminate or exclude each other, he urges them both to contribute, by mutual criticism and mutual complementarity, to a healthy, united Korean church.

Reflections on Ryu's Analysis

Ryu uses broad brush strokes to paint his picture of the patterns of Korean life and thought. It is difficult and unwise for an outsider to try and judge the extent to which these ring true in Korean experience. However, judging by the references to Ryu in later theology, he is indeed tapping into some deep veins of Korean thought.

It is possible to fault Ryu on the details. For example, though he emphasises the Confucian character of Kil's movement, the revival that started in 1907 also broke out of a Confucian mould. Kim Yong Bock has shown how, in contrast to Confucianism, which emphasised self-cultivation or refinement, the Christian message of the Holy Spirit was one of transformation, and this was applied socially as well as individually.³¹ Secondly, though Ryu portrays Cho's movement as maternal in the mode of Korean primal religion, it also displays many characteristics of Confucian leadership, most notably in the fact that the ordained leadership of the Full Gospel Church is exclusively male. Thirdly, Jong Chun Park questions whether Lee's revival is properly described as 'other-worldly'. He regards Lee Yong-do's challenge to the established church, which had become quiescent and increasingly depoliticised since 1919, as having an intensely political motive.³² What Lee was not able to achieve through direct political action, he now sought to achieve by reforming the church. A fourth point to illustrate that Ryu's schema is an oversimplification is that it is not appropriate to portray *minjung* theologians in their quest to change social structures as unconcerned about human beings. It was Suh Nam-dong who began his theology with *han* (not to be confused with the word *han* used by Ryu), the feeling of resentment mixed with dogged determination of the oppressed. These examples do not disprove Ryu's thesis but they do encourage caution.

³¹ Kim Yong-Bock, 113-116.

³² Jong Chun Park, *Crawl with God, dance in the Spirit! A creative formation of Korean theology of the Spirit*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 1998, 61, 64-72.

By showing, as he does, how the movements fall in with long-standing Korean cultural traits, Ryu shows that they are indigenous forms of Christianity and that their differences are not due to either being extraneous. It is not surprising that Korean theology, of whatever religion, should take shape from Korean traditions. The one-sidedness of each movement is thus seen to result from fault-lines in Korean society and therefore, Ryu implies, their learning to live together and strengthen one another is a necessary part of national unification. In this particular case, the fault-line is the paternal-maternal one. Though it is not explicit, underlying Ryu's analysis is the pervasive influence of *ŭmyang* philosophy in Korean culture. *ŭmyang*, better known by the Chinese pronunciation *yinyang*, is prominent in the ancient Chinese religion, Taoism and has also been integrated into Confucianism. *Yin* and *yang* are the two complementary forces that explain the whole of life. *Yin* is thought of as female and *yang* as male. *Yin* includes the concepts of earth, dark, passive, and absorbing; *yang* includes their opposites of heaven, light, active, and penetrating. As images of male and female, they correspond closely to stereotypes of masculine and feminine found in other societies. The theory can either be seen as promoting the reconciliation of the genders or as driving a wedge between them. A *yinyang* symbol appears on the Korean flag, and the way it is represented reveals the patriarchal nature of Korean society. Unlike the commonly used Chinese symbol, the Korean *yinyang* is horizontal with the *yang* — red, and meaning heaven and male — above the *yin* — blue, and meaning earth and female. Furthermore, on the Korean flag the small circles within each part of the circle that show the interchange between the two in the Chinese diagram are omitted, as if to emphasise that in Korea there is no mixing of the two.

Be that as it may, divisions between paternal — in the sense of public and political — theologies and maternal — in the sense of private and personal — theologies are found in other contexts also, and often, I suspect, with the same male-female associations. Perhaps Ryu's analysis can help us appreciate and challenge each other?

P'ungnyu *Theology*

Though both claim to be Holy Spirit movements, it is clear that Ryu does not regard either the paternal or the maternal alone as fully manifesting the work of the Spirit. He does not discern the work of the Spirit in Korea primarily in socio-political movements or in charismatic

ones but in sustaining the mind or spirit of the Korean people that flowered in the Three Kingdoms and that he believes has endured through the tribulations of the last thirteen centuries. It is on this basis that he develops his own *p'unghyu* theology, which draws on the thought of three people. The first is Lee Yong-do, the revivalist, whose thought, Ryu believes, reflects the founding spirit of Korean culture expressed as *han*, *mōt*, and *sam*.³³ The second is Kim Chae-chun, who was excommunicated for his 'Holy Spirit' biblical interpretation and went on to develop a theology of national culture and cosmic community.³⁴ And the third is Ham Sok Hon (Ham Sōk-hōn; 1901-1989), a teacher and peace-campaigner, who has been described as 'a Korean Gandhi' because of the way in which he has articulated a national vision derived from ancient Korean traditions. Ham has developed a theology of suffering derived from Korean history.³⁵ His work is not discussed in *The Mineral Veins of Korean Theology* since he was still theologically active when it was written. Inspired by these three theologians — Lee, Kim and Ham — and also with reference to John Macquarrie and Teilhard de Chardin, Ryu advocates a "religio-cosmic" approach to theology, which has an interconnected view of nature, a cosmic view of history, and is a pneumatic religion.³⁶

Ryu wishes to affirm the work of the Holy Spirit in the highest and best of Korean culture and to encourage Korean theologians to take the spirit of *han-mōt-sam* as their starting point. In doing so, he suggests that, instead of being preoccupied with the socio-political, theologians should give more attention to popular religious movements. He recognises both the elite and the popular, the paternal and the maternal as movements of the Holy Spirit but suggests that the greatest work of the Spirit is yet to be realised. This will come when the two work together, appreciating that both are small parts of the greater purposes of God who, as Spirit, is not gender-specific, but as father and mother brings about the evolution of the whole creation toward spiritual life, the truly human life.

³³ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 136-165.

³⁴ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 248-262.

³⁵ Ham Sok Hon, *Queen of suffering: a spiritual history of Korea* (trans. E. Sang Yu; edited and abridged by John A. Sullivan), London: Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1985.

³⁶ Ryu, *The Mineral Veins*, 438-440.

Concluding Remarks

Ryu's work is rich and insightful as he mines the veins of the holy mountains from which Korean religiosity draws its strength. As he relates the story of the inception, growth and flowering of Korean theological thought, he highlights the struggle to decide between conflicting loyalties to the message as originally received from the missionaries on the one hand and to the thousands of years of growth of religious understanding of the Korean people themselves. In doing so he uncovers the depths of thought and cultural riches on which Koreans have to draw and shows how Koreans — whether inclined to be conservative or reforming — cannot but respond to the Christian gospel from the perspective of the tradition of which they are a part.

Ryu's book is primarily a history of the development of Korean Christian theology that offers suggestions as to its future trajectory rather than a systematic attempt to do theology in a Korean way. Furthermore, his observations about the maternal and paternal nature of the Holy Spirit movements are more about their nature as religious phenomena than about their differing theologies of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, he shows that both share a sense that, in this current era, the Holy Spirit is being poured out in a special way on the Korean people, and that both see themselves as entrusted with a mission, though they envision it differently. The maternal concept of the Holy Spirit suggests a primal, creative and life-giving spirit whose role, like that of the shaman is to solve problems caused by natural forces and restless spirits through cosmic processes. The paternal concept of the Holy Spirit implies a patriarchal, though benevolent, authority concerned with establishing family and social order according to the will of God by means of education in moral principles. These different movements and the corresponding pneumatologies appear incompatible but the fact is that they are combined in most Korean Protestant churches and in the lives of Korean Christians. The public face of most Korean churches — even Yoido Full Gospel Church — on Sunday morning is Confucian in appearance and organisation and yet, due to the revivalist nature of Korean Christianity, more Pentecostal-style worship and healing are practised in other services and meetings throughout the week. Churches and individuals may lean more toward one form of expression than the other, but they inherit both patterns. The way in which these two images of the Holy Spirit are combined in Korean theological understanding bears further investigation.

It is one thing to say that Korean theology should reflect Korean culture; it is another to assert that Korean culture is of the Holy Spirit. Because of the way Ryu begins his theology by uncritically affirming Korean heritage, it is open to the accusations levelled against other spirit theologies or philosophies that are optimistic about human progress and encourage nationalist fervour. Identifying the Spirit of God with a particular national identity is as dangerous a step to take as identifying the Spirit with a particular ideology or religious movement, though these are common tendencies of theologians. It is perhaps less dangerous if that identity is one that challenges rather than supports the ruling authorities. The motive to encourage self-respect and national pride is understandable in the light of the history of Korean humiliation and suffering, and the affirmation of the spirituality of the poor is an important step in challenging the abuse of power of the elite. However, pneumatology needs to be more sophisticated than this if it is to reflect the fact of history that what are claimed to be movements of the Spirit often have consequences that are far from holy. It should allow for the possibility of disobedience to the Spirit or, using an image in keeping with the Korean traditional worldview, the interference of other, ungodly, spirits.

While greatly indebted to Ryu's thought, Jong Chun Park has pointed out that the Korean revival began with repentance of sin, with a recognition that not all Korean culture was of the Spirit of God. It began when the people did not see themselves only as victims but as complicit in their own personal and national failure, as sinners as well as sinned against.³⁷ In their evangelical expression of faith, they looked to the Holy Spirit as a power from *outside* their situation which offered hope that, at least at that time, they did not find in their own tradition. To my mind, this acceptance of individual and corporate responsibility for history has been the strength of the Korean people in the twentieth century. It was this refusal to indulge in victim-hood and the ability to grasp the hope of grace beyond their tragic circumstances that has enabled the nation to rise again from the ashes of humiliation and destruction. In addition to *han*, *mŏt* and *sam*, the Korean people have held onto *ggum*, that is a "dream" or "vision". In the midst of poverty and adversity, they have not lost hope of blessing from God in the form of a better life.³⁸

³⁷ Park, 62.

³⁸ Sebastian C.H. Kim, "The problem of the poor in post-war Korean Christianity: *Kibock sinang* or *mŏnjung* theology?" *Transformation* (forthcoming).

Ryu has chosen to identify *minjung* theology and the Full Gospel Church as the post-Liberation (from Japan) Holy Spirit movements, though he qualifies this in both cases. His anger at the suppression of theological freedom by Evangelicals, both Koreans and foreign missionaries, leads him to reject the moving of the Holy Spirit in the mainstream of the Korean Church, which is overwhelmingly evangelical. As a result, Ryu does not tell the whole story of Korean theology; he draws only on two extremes of the spectrum of Christian faith and practice. To be true to Korean pneumatology, we cannot ignore the majority Evangelical churches. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit revealed in Scripture, who leads us to Jesus Christ, is not captured in any movement. The universality of the Spirit's presence in creation encourages us to affirm, as Ryu does, what is excellent and praiseworthy in our cultures and traditions and, at the same time, the specific renewing of the Spirit who comes from above, fulfilled in the life and work of Jesus Christ, encourages us to question ourselves and our cultures and to put our hope in God, who is beyond any of them. God, as Spirit, does indeed unite both primal and new, maternal and paternal.

Kirsteen Kim (b. 1959) is Tutor at the United College of the Ascension, Selly Oak and Honorary Lecturer of the University of Birmingham. She is the author of numerous articles and her first monograph *Mission in the Spirit: the Holy Spirit in Indian Christian theologies* was published in Delhi by ISPCK in 2003.

Copyright of Exchange is the property of Brill Academic Publishers and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.