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Ecophilosophy in Modern East Asia: The Case of Hansalim in South Korea

Ekofilozofia we współczesnej Azji Wschodniej: przypadek hansalizmu w Korei Południowej

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Abstract
This article is devoted to examining the relevance of ecophilosophy for sustainable development, especially in the modern East Asian context. It is framed as a response to environmental historian Mark Elvin's claim that allegedly eco-friendly philosophical and spiritual traditions like Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism had no effect in preventing environmental degradation in the long history of preindustrial China, and also that given this historical precedent, ecophilosophy – or any type of ideology as such – is likely to have no relevance in the efforts toward sustainable development now under way worldwide. The article argues the necessity of examining Asian countries that are farther along in industrialization than China, and which have witnessed the emergence of powerful ecophi-losophy-based movements as a reaction to industrialization and its unfortunate side-effects. In particular, the article focuses on the remarkable case of the Hansalim movement in South Korea, which has represented arguably the most comprehensive attempt yet at formulating an ecophilosophy based on the East Asian traditions which is relevant and practical for today's world. While Hansalim's achievements as the operator of the world's largest community-based organic food cooperative have recently begun to gain recognition abroad, this article focuses on the ecophilosophy underlying the movement – for which food has been but a symbol – and analyzes it to be rich in implications, especially concerning the social pillar of sustainable development, localism, and the role of ecophi-losophy.

Key words: ecophilosophy, East Asia, South Korea, Hansalim, organic food cooperative, the social pillar of sustainable development, localism

Streszczenie
Artykuł podejmuje kwestię roli, jaką ekofilozofia może odegrać we wspieraniu rozwoju zrównoważonego, szczególnie w kontekście współczesnej Azji Wschodniej. To odpowiedź na twierdzenie historyka Marka Elvina, według którego pozornie prośrodowiskowe tradycje filozoficzne i duchowe, takie jak taoizm, buddyzm i konfucjonizm, nie powstrzymały degradacji środowiska w długiej przedprzemysłowej historii Chin. Co więcej, także współczesna ekofilozofia – czy jakakolwiek inna ideologia – nie wydaje się mieć związku z działaniami na rzecz zrównoważonego rozwoju. Tymczasem przykład krajów azjatyckich, których rozwój przemysłowy jest wolniejszy niż Chin, wskazuje na prężny rozwój silnych ruchów opartych na ekofilozofii, stanowiących reakcję na industrializację i jej niefortunne skutki uboczne. Szczególnym przypadkiem jest ruch hansalizmu z Korei Południowej, który reprezentuje bodaj najbardziej wszechstronną próbę sformułowania ekofilozofii opartej na wschodnio-azjatyckiej tradycji, która wydaje się być odpowiednią i praktyczną także dla współczesnego świata. Podczas, gdy osiągnięcia hansalizmu, jako zarządcy największej światowej kooperatywy produkującej żywność organiczną stają się coraz bardziej znane, warto skoncentrować się na założeniach ekofilozoficznych przyjętych przez ten ruch – gdzie żywność jest symbolem – i przedstawić ich liczne implikacje, szczególnie te odnoszące się do społecznego filaru rozwoju zrównoważonego, regionalizmu i roli, jaką w tym wszystkim powinna odgrywać ekofilozofia.

Słowa kluczowe: ekofilozofia, Azja Wschodnia, Kora Południowa, kooperatywa żywności organicznej, hansalizm, społeczny filar rozwoju zrównoważonego, regionalizm

Introduction

There used to be a time when discussions of the East Asian traditions of ecophilosophy did not require an elaborate justification. A fundamental assumption in ecological thinking once used to be that the massive environmental destruction which has accompanied the progress of modern civilization is ultimately rooted in the anthropocentric philosophical and religious traditions of the West, whose basic premise, according to Lynn White, is *that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man* (White, 1967, 1973, p. 25). This assumption led a number of scholars to study non-Western philosophical and spiritual traditions in search of alternative views on the proper relationship between humanity and nature, and not a few went on to seek their answers in Eastern philosophy. Yet since the 1960s and 70s, when views such as White's were accepted more or less as orthodoxy, there have been a number of new developments. To begin with, industrialization spread to numerous Asian countries, and the environmental destruction they experienced proved to be just as acute, their presumably non-Western philosophical and spiritual traditions notwithstanding. Moreover, with advances in scholarship on East Asian history, there have been attempts by some scholars to supplant the romanticized views of its traditions with what they consider more realistic ones. A representative example has been Mark Elvin, one of our foremost authorities today on the environmental history of China. In his recent magisterial work synthesizing a generation of scholarship on the subject, the Cambridge-trained Sinologist concluded that, even before the 20th century, the trend in China for four thousand years had been one where humans exploited nature to the point of its near exhaustion, and that the traditions such as Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism in the end had no appreciable effect in retarding or arresting the process (Elvin, 2004). Based on this conclusion, Elvin went so far as to question whether ideology as such – ecophilosophy included – has any relevance, not just in the East Asian context, but more generally in the worldwide efforts now under way toward making sustainable development a reality.

Those who wish to discuss the East Asian traditions of ecophilosophy are thus left today with two options. One is to approach their study purely as an academic exercise, without explicitly addressing the questions concerning their practical utility and relevance such as raised by Elvin. As the recent anthology edited by Callicott and McRae shows, *comparative environmental philosophy* remains in this sense a thriving field of academic inquiry (Callicott, McRae, 2014). Yet those who are still concerned with the relevance of the East Asian traditions of ecophilosophy – or of ecophilosophy in general, in fact – are left with no other option but to attempt to address the views such as Elvin's and, if they so choose, elaborate in what ways such traditions have been or can be relevant. In this article, we seek to pursue the second approach.

We would like to begin by suggesting that the history of preindustrial China, which is the main basis for Elvin's generalizations, may not be the best source of data for examining ecophilosophy's possible relevance for sustainable development. As well known, modern environmentalism, which has been a major force behind the growing acceptance of sustainable development as a new, more desirable development paradigm, emerged in part as an ideological reaction to industrialization. As Ramachandra Guha (among others) have noted, what has distinguished modern environmentalism from the general love of nature, which has been common enough in many traditional cultures, is an acute sense of crisis, and the very concept of ecophilosophy has been embraced by environmentalists and others sympathetic to their cause as an ideological weapon to be used in their struggle (Guha, 2000). The evidence of ecophilosophy's relevance, in short, is not to be sought in the history of humanity's preindustrial past, but more properly in what it has been able to do since industrialization and what it may yet be able to do in the future. In this sense, China indeed may not be the best place to investigate the relevance of the East Asian traditions of ecophilosophy for sustainable development: it is a country still undergoing industrialization and one where ideological dissent has been thus far little tolerated; any generalizations based on Chinese experience on the issue of ecophilosophy's relevance or the lack thereof are likely premature. What seems more appropriate instead are case studies focusing on Asian countries where industrialization has reached a more mature stage, and where ecophilosophy has had a chance to play a more noticeably prominent role (Kaczmarek, 2012; Hłobił, 2012).

This article is devoted to analyzing the Hansalim movement in South Korea as one such case study. As an Asian country with a relatively mature industrial economy, South Korea satisfies the criteria just mentioned. And despite Hansalim's centrality in the history of Korean environmentalism, and despite the recognition it has begun to receive abroad for its contributions toward sustainable development – in 2014 the Hansalim Association was one of the Gold recipients of the One World Award jointly given out by Rapunzel and the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) – its story remains relatively little known to the outside world. While the story of its progress thus constitutes an important missing chapter in the annals of modern environmentalism, there are more reasons for focusing on Hansalim than from the interest of historical doc-

umentation alone. Other mature industrial economies of East Asia include Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. While there have also been attempts by environmental activists in these countries to draw upon the East Asian philosophical and spiritual traditions, we know of no other instance of an *intellectual* movement aimed at formulating as comprehensive an ecophilosophy for the modern times as *Hansalim* or one that has been able to play as extensive a role in practical terms. In fact, Hansalim may be said to have been a living experiment in how to formulate an ecophilosophy that is relevant and practical for today's world, and analyzing its achievements and their contributing causes can help shed light on some of the central issues concerning sustainable development. Among such issues are (1) how to think more rigorously and creatively about the relationship of the *social* pillar of sustainable development to the economic and ecological, (2) how to balance the conflicting demands of localism and globalism, and finally (3) why ecophilosophy may indeed matter. Before moving on to examining these issues, a brief narrative of Hansalim's origins and progress will help situate them in their proper context.

Origins and Progress

As Guha among others have documented, in Western countries which were affected by industrialization early on, the first wave of modern environmentalism appeared as early as the nineteenth century. In Britain in particular, which was the first country to experience the Industrial Revolution, environmentalism originated primarily as a movement in literary, artistic, and philosophical circles, where ideological reaction to industrialization first set in. The progenitors of South Korea's Hansalim were also primarily poets, writers, and intellectuals. Yet in contrast to the early British environmentalists, who enjoyed the secure comforts of living in a country then near the height of its imperial power, and under a government which was among the most liberal for its time, the early experiences of Hansalim's founders were shaped by a vastly different set of circumstances. When they were born, their country still remained under Japanese colonial rule, which began in 1910 as part of Japan's growing militarism and imperial ambitions in East Asia and ended with its defeat in WW II in 1945. Even with the end of colonial rule, full independence did not follow, as the Soviet Union and the United States respectively claimed the northern and southern halves of the country as their protectorates, thus marking the beginning of division into two Koreas, and eventuating in a devastating war (1950-1953) which was the first overtly hot spot of the so-called Cold War. The chaos and grinding poverty of the postwar years then set the stage for a military coup led in 1961 by General Chung-hee Park, who would remain the country's president for nearly twenty years until his assassination in 1979. President Park was successful in implementing economic programs that would lead his country out of poverty and set it on the course to becoming a developed industrial economy at a pace that has been described as a *miracle*. Yet as with most military dictatorships of the time, Park's regime was also characterized by a widespread disregard for human rights and a brutal repression of dissent. As might be expected, most of those who later became the founders of Hansalim remained throughout the 1960s and 70s dissident intellectuals and anti-government activists protesting their country's military dictatorship.

As studies have shown, it has not been unusual for environmental activism in Asia to be *part of a larger social movement opposing authoritarianism and advancing more direct forms of democratic participation* (Lee, So, 1999, p. 11). While this remained true of many other environmental groups in Korea, what distinguished Hansalim was that its birth was precisely due to the decision on the part of its founders to end their confrontational relationship with the government. According to one of its principal intellectual founders, Chi-ha Kim, he experienced a spiritual awakening and epiphany while serving a prison term in the late 1970s, which led him to abandon his former identity as a dissident poet and anti-government activist and embrace an entirely different way of relating to the world, as it were. The original sentence he received for his anti-government activities had been death penalty; though it was later commuted to life imprisonment, his close encounter with death and declining health from which he continued to suffer while in prison led him to develop a deep interest in something far more fundamental than politics: the problem of existence itself. Through meditation and readings, he began exploring the very concept of life, eventually delving into the life sciences, ecology, the ecophilosophy of various Western schools, and especially the Eastern philosophical and spiritual traditions (Kim, 2008). He came to conclude that the hardship his country experienced in the modern times had been the symptoms of a much larger phenomenon and a more fundamental ill: a misguided attempt at – or a mistaken version – of modernization which had abandoned what he would eventually call the *Life Principle* or *Saeng-myung Sa-sang* in Korean (Hansalim, 1990a, 1990b). In contrast to the traditional Eastern view of the universe as an organic, living, interconnected whole, where nature and humanity, society and individual, were considered part of a seamless continuum and not distinct or opposing entities, the modern mechanistic view of the universe has insisted on the separateness of everything, whereby nature and other human beings came to be seen as objects, and hence ultimately easy prey to all forms of exploitation.

Released from prison following President Park's assassination, Kim joined up with some of his former cohorts to launch in the 1980s what they initially called the *Life Movement*. Kim was not the only for-

mer activist, it turned out, who had come to feel that the angry protest of a political dissident might be too limited a form of activism, that there had to be a way of addressing society's ills on a more fundamental level. Il-soon Jang, who along with Kim co-founded the Life Movement, had been particularly active in leading agrarian and labor protests in the 1960s and 70s. Yet towards the late 70s, he came to feel that such protest movements had had a limited success at best (Hansalim, 1990c; MSI, 2006; Shin, 2007; Yoon, 2010). As he and Kim reflected together on the causes, they came to conclude that the fundamental problem had been, once again, the habit of thinking in terms of separation and opposition, and not interconnectedness and cooperation. The agrarian protests, in particular, had taken place under the assumption that urban consumers were the enemies of farmers, that their interests were opposed. Kim and Jang came to conclude that the true solution to the problem of rural poverty did not lie in pitting farmers against urban consumers, but the opposite: promoting a more cooperative and symbiotic relationship between them and making them see that such a mutually beneficial exchange process was the norm in nature, where life could not exist without countless such exchanges taking place throughout the ecosystem (Hansalim, 1990b).

The Life Movement grew and expanded in two directions. First, it continued to grow as an intellectual movement, as more and more intellectuals who were attracted to its basic tenets began to join and add their own elaborations. While Chi-ha Kim claimed himself to be heir to the neo-Confucian school of Donghak, the Life Movement remained open to all sources of ideas, Eastern and Western, that could help fill out its intellectual edifice. Political scientist Soon-hong Moon, for example, thus became the first noted advocate of ecofeminism in Korea, while also serving as the translator of a number of key contemporary environmental publications from Europe and North America (e.g., Moon, 2006). As an intellectual movement, one of the Life Movement's principal achievements became supplying environmental activism in Korea with a comprehensive ecophilosophy and fundamentally transforming it thereby. Before the Life Movement, environmental activism in Korea had been little concerned with conserving nature; it consisted almost exclusively of advocacy for the people's rights against a corrupt government-industry combine believed to be responsible for pollution-related health hazards. It had been, in short, a movement to protect people, and the very concept of ecology had been left out. The Life Movement is credited with helping consolidate and energize what could have remained disjointed acts of protest and launch a veritable nationwide environmental movement in Korea based on ecological principles (Shin, 2007; Ku, 2009).

Nor did the founders of the Life Movement limit themselves to influencing others through their writings and lectures alone. Having renounced activism based on confrontation, they pursued a new form of activism more consistent with the Life Principle. Most notably, they organized in the late 1980s a national association of organic food cooperatives that could help promote a symbiotic relationship between farmers and urban consumers and educate the public concerning the Life Principle (MSI, 2006). As they saw it, there could not be a more potent symbol than food to illustrate the interconnectedness of everything in nature and the exchange processes that made life possible. Put succinctly, food was life and life became food. And nothing seemed more indicative of the destructiveness of the mechanistic view of the universe, which had perverted the order of things, than the uses of harmful pesticides and chemical fertilizers to increase the crop yield, which was to poison life itself in exchange for economic gains, and the increasing mistrust and confrontation between the producers of food and their consumers, who in reality were life-dependent partners (Hansalim, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c).

The name adopted for this cooperative association was Hansalim, which may be best rendered into English as *Living Together*. Just as living together could mean coexisting in nature, working together to save one another from destruction, and cohabiting and maintaining a common household, Hansalim signifies all three. It is now the term generally used to represent, in place of *Life Movement*, both the food coop association and the general intellectual principles formulated by Kim, Jang, and their cohorts.

Three Pillars of Hansalim: Social, Local, and Philosophical

By 2014 the sponsors of the One World Award was to note of Hansalim: *The biggest community-supported agriculture organization in the world. On 2,000 farms the association produces health food products for 1.6 million people. The product distribution is organized by 21 distributing coops, 180 health food stores and a sophisticated delivery system*. Concerning the award itself, they explained: *The objective of the award is based on the three pillars of sustainable development: ECOLOGY, ECONOMY and SOCIAL ASPECTS* (One World Award, 2014). While it is certainly possible to analyze Hansalim's contributions in terms of the three generally accepted criteria of sustainable development, a more fruitful analysis of its fundamental principles and their relevance for the worldwide debates on sustainable development may require slightly different headings. For the three pillars of Hansalim may be said to have been its emphasis on the *social*, *local*, and *philosophical*.

(1) *Emphasis on the social*. As Kevin Murphy has recently noted, of the three pillars of sustainable development, *the meaning and associated objectives of the social pillar remain vague* and *it has been de-*

scribed as the most conceptually elusive pillar in SD discourse (Murphy, 2012, p. 15). The term *(ecologically) sustainable development* was originally coined as part of an effort to reconcile the conflicting demands of economic development and environmental protection; if our thinking on the social pillar of sustainable development lags behind that on the economic and the ecological, it is in part because it has been historically a later addition (Pak, 2014). Moreover, the trade-off between economic development and environmental degradation is intuitively easy to grasp, while the relation of either, let alone both, to social changes is extremely complex, which might further go to explain why a good part of sustainable development discourse has continued to focus on issues relating to the trade-off between the economic and the ecological. Still, some scholars have suggested that the key to making sustainable development possible lies precisely in social changes. According to sustainable economist Tim Jackson, for example, arguably the most important driver of economic growth today and also the principal cause of accelerated depletion of the natural resources and environmental degradation is consumerism, which is fueled to a great extent by status anxiety, a social phenomenon, if there ever was one (Jackson, 2008). People keep buying things they do not really need in order to keep up with the Joneses and corporations depend on their continuing to do so. If society could be organized on a new basis so that people may satisfy their need for status through some other channel than consumption, or better yet, seek the affirmation of self-worth through some other criterion than social status, genuinely sustainable development, Jackson maintains, may yet be possible (Jackson, 2009). The question, of course, is how to bring about such social changes, and here Jackson's answer stipulates another type of trade-off: it is the job of government, says Jackson, to encourage and reinforce new behavior among citizens, thus making an ever intrusive government the necessary price for a more sustainable lifestyle (Jackson, 2008).

Hansalim suggests an alternative way of thinking about the social pillar of sustainable development. The keen interest of its founders in the social has been due to two main reasons. In the first place, they began as activists seeking greater social justice under a military dictatorship; as related, some of them came to embrace an ecological movement while seeking a solution to address society's ills on a more fundamental level. Second, while remaining open to new sources of ideas, they have also tried to remain faithful to their understanding of the East Asian philosophical and spiritual traditions. As numerous scholars have argued, the *Arcadian* tradition in Western environmentalism – popular among the early British environmentalists and still a powerful ideological font – has arisen as a protest against a virulent form of anthropocentrism allegedly central to the Western tradition, but it too assumes an essentially adversarial relationship between nature and human beings (Pak, 2012). If the Western tradition has by and large insisted on the right of human beings to subdue nature so it no longer poses a threat, Arcadian environmentalism flips the emphasis around to argue the right of nature to be protected against human intrusion. According to the Arcadian tradition, human civilization thus constitutes the antithesis of nature, and it is against this notion that the modern *Utilitarian* school of environmentalism has been arguing the need for regarding human civilization as an extension of nature, not its antithesis, and nature and human society as constituting a continuum, and not standing in an adversarial relationship. According to Hansalim, the tradition in the East – before it was eclipsed by imported alien thinking contrary to its principles – has always been to regard human society as an extension of nature and its improvement as dependent on an ever more faithful adherence to the principles of nature (Hansalim, 1990a, 1990b). It is highly relevant that Hansalim claimed itself to be heir to the neo-Confucian school of Donghak. While Confucianism was originally based on the principles of Daoism – Confucius's commentaries on the book of *I Ching* may well constitute the largest extant body of writing we have from Confucius himself – its particular focus came to rest on the importance of proper social relations and ethical conduct. The Donghak school originated in late 19th-century Korea in part as a reaction to Western learning which had begun to infiltrate East Asia – Donghak literally means *Eastern Learning* – but more fundamentally as an attempt to reinterpret and revitalize the Confucian tradition which had for centuries remained at the core of Korean society (Cumings, 1998, p. 115-120). In the Hansalim interpretation of Donghak, all things share attributes of divinity, since it is through them that the Divine realizes itself; given this shared divinity, nothing is inherently superior or inferior in the universe – human beings are not superior to non-human beings and even non-living beings are not inferior to living beings – and the same cosmic principle of equality should be the foundation of a proper society, and not social hierarchy, as in the traditional interpretation of Confucianism (Hansalim, 1990a). With its radical egalitarian philosophy, Donghak eventually became the ideological basis for one of the most widespread peasant rebellions in Korean history. Hansalim went farther than Donghak in many ways, especially in its attempt to overcome the gulf between Eastern and Western learning – again, cooperation, not opposition – but remained faithful to its spirit in linking the cosmic with the social, or in more up-to-date terminology, the ecological with the social.

Like Jackson, Hansalim believes that social changes are key to sustainable development. According to its founders, the tendency of modern society to emphasize economic gains at the expense of everything else has been greatly exacerbated by the replacement of

an economy based on various interlocking social relations with one that operates through the impersonal mechanism of the market (Hansalim, 1990a). In a simple barter economy, for example, the producer of food deals directly with its consumer, and knowing the consumer as a person, is far more likely to refrain from using, say, poisonous pesticides; moreover, the fact that the producer of food in turn requires the goods and services provided by other members of the community all the more reinforces the necessity of a relationship based on trust and fairness (Moon, 1992). In the modern market economy, food is essentially a commodity that is exchanged for money, and with a number of intermediary – whole, retail, and so on – buyers and sellers in between, it becomes almost irrelevant for the producer to think about the human being that eventually consumes the food. And what the producer of food requires in order to purchase the goods and services provided by others in a market economy is, again, money; he or she is thus given all the more reasons to focus on earning more money, and not producing better or safer food. Hansalim's organic food cooperative association has been an attempt to emulate trust-based social relations reminiscent of a direct barter, but adapted to be fully operational in modern society. Its membership comprises both producers and consumers, who meet regularly to agree on proper levels of annual production and land use, safety standards, acceptable levels of carbon footprint, and so on – and pricing necessary to make it all work while being fair to both producers and consumers. Many members also participate in events held throughout the year to educate themselves and the public about the ecophilosophy of Hansalim.

Unlike the view such as Jackson's – and he is by no means alone in espousing it – that intrusive government intervention is a necessary trade-off for sustainable development, Hansalim does not advocate greater government action. If it truly had its way, it would prefer to see a society consisting mainly of autonomous local communities, with minimal to no interference from government. That is to say, not only does it prefer to see nurturing social relations replacing the market, but much of the formal apparatus of government as well.

(2) *Emphasis on the local*. Communal relations such as emphasized by Hansalim presumably presuppose people living in relatively self-contained communities which are reasonably compact. The idea of localism is not new nor is it exclusive to the Eastern tradition. Localism, for example, was central to a number of non-Marxist socialist traditions before they were eclipsed by Marxism: the utopian socialist Charles Fourier, for example, advocated the world population being reorganized into autonomous *phalanxes* consisting of a few thousand souls each, where people would learn to rely on gratifying personal relations. The idea of a stateless society that functions mainly through voluntary associations was of course also central to several schools of anarchism. In more recent times, softer varieties of localism have been embraced by modern environmentalists, and various arguments in their behalf have become a mainstay in sustainable development discourse. Thus, for example, Arné Naess, the principal founder of the deep ecology movement, observed that *increased local autonomy reduces energy consumption* (Naess, 2008, p. 146), while *localism* and *municipalism* now constitute foundational concepts in social ecology (Merchant, 2005; O'Connor, 2008).

Though Hansalim was influenced by deep ecology and other varieties of Western ecological thinking, its emphasis on localism actually predated its encounters with them. In fact, the idea of self-sufficient, autonomous rural communities had been embraced by the Donghak peasant rebellions of the late 19th century, and was popular also among dissident intellectuals and anti-government activists in Korea in the 1960s and 70s (Lee, 2007). Those who went on to found Hansalim had been active in the agrarian protests and farmers's cooperative movements long before Hansalim; as has been seen, it was their lack of success in such endeavors that led some of them to embrace ecophilosophy as a solution (Hansalim, 1990b; Ku, 2009).

One of the oldest challenges for localism has always been preventing autonomous local communities from becoming isolated from one another, and in the worst case, chaos and conflict resulting from each community being left free to pursue its own interest. While this problem remained largely unsolved in the earlier, localism-based socialist traditions, Marxism eventually bypassed the problem, in a manner of speaking, by relying on centralized state bureaucracy in place of localism. Hansalim may have found a different type of solution. As its founders came to realize, the previous attempts at creating autonomous rural communities in Korea had failed precisely because of the problem of isolation and the lack of coordination among them (Hansalim, 1990a). Their solution was to create a movement that remains rooted in local communities, but which is unified on the national level by virtue of a powerful shared ideology. Hansalim's organic food cooperative association is designed to illustrate the workings of this model: while its local chapters remain community-based, they are unified nationally by the ecophilosophy of Hansalim, with its members voluntarily regulating their own behavior according to a common code of ethical conduct. This way, the Hansalim model has been able to challenge the view that the behavior change required for sustainable development cannot take place without intrusive government intervention. With their days of anti-government activism behind them, what Hansalim's founders deliberately sought were *extra*-governmental solutions – solutions, that is, where government becomes by and large irrelevant.

(3) *Emphasis on the philosophical*. We are thus brought back to our initial question: does ecophilosophy have any relevance in our efforts toward sustainable development today? We have seen that in the case of Hansalim the answer has been a resounding positive. According to Eder, Hansalim's appeal has been essentially an *emotional* one, and the movement is *incapable of sustaining a modern environmental movement* because it lacks *rationalism and consistent scientific rigor* (Eder, 1996, p.113). We now have reasons to question the premise which was operative in Eder's study almost twenty years ago that *rationalism* and *consistent scientific rigor* are what best sustains a modern environmental movement. For all our advances in the scientific studies of environmental problems and other sustainability-related issues since, the public interest in such problems and issues is nowhere near what it once used to be, especially in countries like the United States. What is lacking in the United States today especially compared to the 1960s and 70s is not scientific knowledge, but a viscerally emotional connection the public once felt toward environmental and sustainability-related issues (Pak, 2012). While the social remains the least adequately explored pillar of sustainable development, Murphy has been able to identify from his survey of the existing literature four issues that scholars agree on as particularly urgent: *equity*, *awareness for sustainability*, *participation*, and *social cohesion* (Murphy, 2012). Apart from the equity issue, the urgency of the second and third issue – and also to an extent the fourth – seems to confirm that in our discussions of sustainable development, the public has been largely left behind and that forging a public consensus in its favor has now become a major challenge in moving forward.

It is sometimes too easy for scholars and scientists to forget that those who have the time and training to study and evaluate the so-called scientific facts remain a tiny minority in any society. And even for those who have the time and training, it may yet take several mental leaps to arrive at a concrete program for action based on the scientific facts. The public persuasion required for great changes in history has therefore tended to rely on symbols, rituals, and narratives that can tap into deep emotions by relating the facts in a manner accessible to the public. One cannot hope to improve upon naturalist and sociobiologist E. O. Wilson's elegant formulation: *No matter how much we see, or how beautifully theory falls out to however many decimal places, all of experience is still processed by the sensory and nervous systems peculiar to our species, and all of knowledge is still evaluated by our idiosyncratically evolved emotions. (…) Art is in our bones: We all live by narrative and metaphor*. (Wilson, 2000, p.358) Among the virtues of ecophilosophy such as Hansalim's is that it can help orchestrate emotionally-charged symbols, rituals, and narratives in the most comprehensive and effective manner, with stories that are cosmic in scale, deeply moral in implications, and practical in application. While not everyone might find such stories persuasive, others may not be persuaded by anything less.

Nor, of course, are the uses of ecophilosophy limited to persuading the public. As a number of authors and authorities have noted, *the presentation of SD issues without reference to their interpillar relationships may be described as 'bundling', 'artificial', and 'false'* (Murphy, 2012, p. 20). To use Eder's terms, *consistent scientific rigor* requires restoring coherence to our now much fragmented sustainable development discourse, and ecophilosophy like Hansalim's, by virtue of its efforts toward comprehensiveness, challenges us to think more deeply about how our extant ideas on the multifaceted aspects of sustainable development may be brought together to form an interactive whole.

Conclusion

While creating and operating *the biggest community-supported agriculture organization in the world* is not an insignificant achievement, Hansalim entertains no illusions about its accomplishments. The success of its organic food cooperatives has been in fact a source of growing concern for some of its key members, who worry that the food business might absorb most of its energy, at the expense of its bigger objectives, which is to bring about social changes consistent with its ecological principles. Moreover, Hansalim is fully aware that sustainable development is now essentially a global issue, though its strategies have been traditionally geared toward mobilizing the sentiments and initiatives of those within Korea, especially through reliance on symbols, rituals, and narratives of indigenous origin (MSI, 2006). Yet if the story of Hansalim's own progress teaches us anything, reliance on symbols, rituals, and narratives of indigenous origin may not be a source of weakness but strength. The creation of one universal ecophilosophy for all of humanity may yet be possible, but given the world's linguistic and cultural diversity, and given the growing interest in localism, such philosophy many need to be retold in local dialects, as it were, with the help of indigenous symbols and metaphors. To borrow the language of Donghak, the Divine may prefer to express itself in a rich variety of tongues. In this sense, Hansalim has already been contributing to the global efforts toward sustainable development by remaining faithful to its local roots. One of the most effective ways in which it can now further contribute may be to let its own story become more widely known, so that those in other parts of the globe would be further inspired to draw upon their own local traditions and participate in creating rich varieties of ecophilosophy which are much needed by today's world.

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