

Implications of Korean Traditional Epistemology in Planning Theory: Focusing on the Pragmatic Philosophy of Silhak

Jun EunHa, Cho KyuYoung, and Lee SeongWoo

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to investigate the development of Silhak as an Eastern epistemology, the implications of Silhak in Korean society, and to discover further planning implications. More specifically, we present the Silhak philosophers' aporia of symbiotic rationality from the sociological normative perspective, focusing particularly on Dasan's ontology. A consideration of the values of Korean traditional Silhak epistemology would have many implications for the normative aspects of planning theory. First of all, Silhak philosophy argues that society should be understood as a part of an organism that has reciprocal relationships between its components. Second, the pragmatic tendency of Silhak is substantive, in that it pursues a method of improving peoples' lives and national power—not a technical methodology—efficiently and practically within its organic realities. Silhak's adaptation in a changing society to meet the dynamic balance through material and spiritual reform is the third implication for the normative aspects of planning practices in Korea.

Keywords: Silhak, epistemology, planning theory, Korea, Dasan

* This work was supported by a Korea Research Foundation Grant given by the Korea Government (MOEHRD, Basic Research Promotion Fund) (KRF-2005-079-BS0157).

Jun EunHa (Jeon, Eun-ha) is a researcher at the Institute of Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, Seoul National University. E-mail: bangrr99@snu.ac.kr.

Cho KyuYoung (Jo, Gyu-yeong) is Associate Professor of Urban Information Engineering at Anyang University. E-mail: kyuyoung@anyang.ac.kr.

Lee SeongWoo (Yi, Seong-u) is Corresponding Author of this paper and Associate Professor of Program in Community Development and the Institute of Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture at Seoul National University. E-mail: seonglee@snu.ac.kr.

Introduction

Silhak (Practical Learning), a philosophical school of thought developed during the Joseon dynasty,¹ has widely permeated social science literature in Korea. Silhak is best known as a pragmatic Korean philosophy (Keum 2004; KNCU 2004), which has been far less productive than should be expected. In recent years, Silhak has become increasingly visible in the social science literature in Korea (cf. Cheon 1966; Choi 1978; Keum 2002; Koh 2003; Ro 1989; Setton 1997; Shin 1983, 1986). The word “Silhak” is now widely known, but the deeper significance has been only fragmentarily assimilated, with some misinterpretations among intellectuals in general and in the fields of urban and regional planning in particular.

No doubt there are some specialists in the social sciences who are engaged in the academic study of Silhak, but no study has ever been made in the context of urban and regional planning. Thus, the movement in planning is not accompanied by a full-scale systematic study that might be necessary to permanently incorporate Silhak into planning. Moreover, much of the discussion of Silhak in the social science literature in Korea has supported a technical rationality, rather than endorsing a normative dimension. Is this a fair interpretation of Silhak? In this paper, we develop responses to this question by introducing a new interpretation of Silhak's contribution to: 1) the role of society, particularly regarding observations that we live in a pluralistic world, 2) the role of science and societal reality in human life, and 3) the implications for planning practices. We argue that Silhak provides a distinct position on the recent disputes over a new and relevant rationality for planning theory in Korea.

The objective of this paper is to investigate the development of Silhak as an Eastern epistemology, to investigate the implications of Silhak in Korean society, and to further discover its planning implications. More specifically, we present the Silhak philosophers' aporia of

1. The dynasty lasted in Korea from the late 15th century to the early 20th century.

symbiotic rationality from the sociological normative perspective, focusing particularly on Dasan's ontology, in order to recuperate the current lack of normative features of planning theory in Korea. This is neither a tacit dimension nor an archived curio. We shall show that this is just a unity in diversity inquiry, which accurately reflects the everyday life of individuals and organizational activities, where the majority of planning practices are engaged.

The next section explores the general ideology of Eastern epistemology focusing on three aspects of scientific inquiry: society, pluralism, and relativism. After investigating the normative dimension of Silhak in Section 3, Section 4 examines social realities in democratic polities and their congruence with Silhak philosophers' ideologies. The final section discusses how planning can function and what planners can gain from Silhak, followed up by some concluding remarks.

Features of Eastern Epistemology

Epistemology, from the Greek words "episteme" (knowledge) and "logos" (word/speech) is the branch of philosophy concerned with theories of the sources, nature, and limits of knowledge. Since the seventeenth century, epistemology has been one of the fundamental themes of philosophers, who were necessarily obliged to coordinate the theory of knowledge with the development of scientific thought. It is a general belief that Western ideology is substantially embedded in Eastern ideology due to physical and metaphysical colonial involvement.

The first wave from the Western to Eastern world was the work of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), an Italian Jesuit priest. He went to China at the end of the sixteenth century as a missionary and introduced many Western works on mathematics and sciences to China. Unlike other missionaries in South Asia, he found a Chinese culture strongly tied to Confucian values, causing him to conclude that Christianity had to be adapted to Chinese culture in order to take root. He was

fluent in Chinese and called himself a Western Confucian (*xiru*). In his book *Tianzhu shiyi* (The True Doctrine of the Lord of Heaven), which was published in 1603 and widely printed in Eastern countries, he recognized a primordial Confucian philosophy and asserted its similarity to the Christian philosophy, but at the same time dismissed its metaphysical structure on the basis of Western philosophy. After Ricci, a medieval Western culture and worldview prevailed. This alien epistemology delivered a big shock to the Eastern world and it also provided an opportunity for self-reflection and introspection. In Korea, it changed preexisting Sinocentrism to a subjective standpoint on a local level and an epistemology particular to Korean society developed (Song Y. 2004).

However, the worldview shows a fundamental difference between Eastern and Western epistemology because it is a unitary vision, or an integrated view of reality. The characteristic of the Eastern worldview, commonly found in several Eastern philosophies such as Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism, are continuity, circularity, and associability (Chan 1997; Cheng 1991). Tu Weiming (1998) explains these features in Chinese tradition, which are broadly applicable to other features of Eastern philosophy. He says the basic motif in Chinese ontology is "the continuity of being," namely, the belief that all modalities of being are organically connected. This prompts the Chinese to see nature as "the all-enfolding harmony of impersonal cosmic functions." Joseph Needham describes this as "an ordered harmony of wills without an ordainer." This organic process is a spontaneously self-generating life process that exhibits three basic motifs: continuity, wholeness, and dynamism. All modalities of being are integral parts of a continuum. Since nothing exists outside of this continuum, the chain of being is never broken, and everything flows together as the unfolding of a single process. A linkage can always be found between any given pair of things in the universe. The appropriate metaphor to convey this thought is not an eternal, static structure, but rather a dynamic process of growth and transformation. While Chinese thinkers are critically aware of the inertia in human culture that may eventually lead to stagnation, they instruct

people to model themselves on the ceaseless vitality of the cosmic process (Chan 1997). What they envision in the spontaneously self-generating life process is not only interconnectedness and interdependence but also infinite potential for development.

One of the examples that manifest the major concept inherent in this philosophy is the order of *yin* and *yang*. *Yin* and *yang* refer to a pair of polar opposites that are components of a continuum and cause a cyclical pattern of transformation. *Yin* is represented by earth, moon, night, winter, moisture, cool, interior, passive and intuitiveness, whereas *yang* is defined as heaven, sun, day, summer, dry, warmth, exterior, active and all that is rational. *Yin* and *yang* are the nature or the character of a substance, phenomenon or state, not the substance, phenomenon or state itself.

Neither *yin* nor *yang* alone can exist as an organic whole. They should be understood relatively and simultaneously. *Yin* and *yang* exist in all things on different levels, depending on and closely related to each other; therefore they complement each other as opposites. Although *yin* and *yang* are respective polar opposites, each also has an intrinsic opposite nature. Their continuous activities involve the disturbance of the balance or harmony between *yin* and *yang*. The opposing nature of *yin* and *yang* continuously stir their balanced state. Because of this, the new order, the development of a new level of balance or harmony, or the restoration of a given balance and harmony, are possible. Once *yang* gets stronger, *yin* is not eliminated, but just weakened. When *yang* reaches its climax, it stabilizes, and then *yin* starts to move, and vice versa. They move and transform cyclically, continuously seeking a dynamic balance and continuous harmony (cf. Kim 2000).

Many scholars have remarked that the traditional Eastern notion of cyclical change, like the recurrence of the seasonal patterns, is incompatible with the modern Western idea of progress (Chan 1997; Choi 1978; Chun 1982). Unlike the Western linear concept of one-way development, the East understands history as transformation. The specific curve of the cycle that causes transformation at a given period of time is indeterminate, and numerous human and nonhu-

man factors are involved in shaping its form and direction. The great transformation, of which nature is the concrete manifestation, is the result of concord rather than discord and convergence rather than divergence (Tu 1998).

This concept can be applied to explain social conflict and social transformation. Opposite propensities exist in various sectors of society. Their conflicts disturb balance, and thus society transforms into a new dynamic balance and development is achieved. This process is repeated in diverse forms through time and space. Confucians stress the interconnectedness of every element and the critical role of social and political institutions along the way. Hence, several elaborate theories of government developed within Confucianism. We can say that Confucianism is the more active and socially participatory than other Eastern philosophies, especially with regard to moral leadership and practical policies.

To be sure, both in terms of individuals and society as a whole, there is a concern for larger relationships that contribute to the harmony of people with others and with nature, which supports them. A profound sense of this harmony is central to Confucian thinking (Chan 1997; Cheng 1991). The individual is never seen as an isolated entity, but always as a person in relation to other persons, as well as to the cosmos. In the Confucian system, relations extend from the individual in the family to the society and outward to the cosmos. The exchange of mutual obligations and responsibilities between the individual and the cosmos itself constitutes the relational basis of Confucian societies. This worldview has been described as anthropocosmic, embracing heaven, earth, and humans as an interactive whole (Tucker 2003). Thus the value of mutual reciprocity and of belonging to a series of groups is fostered in Confucian societies, and this has been a motto of Silhak, a fact that is more carefully addressed in the following section.

Silhak, a Pragmatic Ideology of Korea

Developments of Silhak

Confucianism is one of the dominant sources of Eastern epistemology. It is both a religion and philosophy, which has developed a framework of cognition and perception over the past several thousand years. In Korea, Buddhism was first introduced from China in the fourth century and was the national religion until fourteenth century. During the Joseon dynasty, which lasted from the fifteenth to nineteenth century, Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the accepted system of belief. Confucianism was not only a religion, but a principle of governance and a prescribed set of appropriate behavior for both the individual and social levels (Choi 1978). Both the spiritual and material worlds were included within its philosophical realm. This Confucian tradition brought forth a reformative and practical philosophy, Silhak, in a time of upheaval around the seventeenth century. The deeply rooted tradition of Confucianism still has potential influence on Korea.

The development of Silhak is divided into three periods: the preparation period (1550-1650), the development period (1650-1750), and the flourishing period (1750-1850) (Cheon 1966; Kalton 1975). Many scholars describe Silhak as a broad intellectual movement rising from a combination of indigenous Korean factors and influences from abroad. Within this movement are numbers of schools, such as the advocates of "Northern (Qing) Learning" (Bukhak), which are based on ties of blood, friendship, or direct intellectual influences; but these schools can by no means include all who participate in Silhak (Kalton 1975; Lee 1979). At the end of the flourishing period, Silhak was replaced as the main intellectual current by the modern thought of the "enlightenment" movement (Setton 1997).

Historically the concept of Silhak was understood as a general term. *Sil* (實) means "real," "actual," or "practical" and *hak* (學) means "learning." Han (1961) defined Silhak as the study advocated from the late Goryeo to early Joseon dynasties that was designed to

bring about practical results in thinking, in governing, in improving oneself, as well as in ruling others, by enlivening the original spirit of Confucianism and rejecting the traditional method of studying it through literature alone. In other words, Silhak is a substantive, true science as opposed to an idealistic, unrealistic pseudo-science. For example, Confucianism, in emphasizing its concern for society, called itself Silhak as opposed to the idea of Taoism or Buddhism, which the Confucians accused of being "empty" because they seemed unconcerned with society.

But since the 1930s, scholars have defined Silhak as the new scholarly trend in Confucianism that emerged in the latter half of Joseon dynasty in the seventeenth century. From that time, Silhak was used to refer to an ideological system that sought the truth of a fact using objective verification and historical evidence, in contrast with the former Silhak, which sought the truth of the heart through explorations of literature (Keum 1999).

Cheon (1979) understands the overall feature of Silhak as "modern-oriented awareness" and "national consciousness." The Joseon dynasty before Silhak is considered to have been a feudal or medieval society in comparison with the Western world. The transfer from medieval to modern society is witnessed from external changes of social or economic systems. What must take place, however, is a worldview change, one having to do with an internal episteme. Pre-existing social conflicts and problems surface during this kind of transformative period. Silhak was developed with open-mindedness in a time of a huge social transformation. Moreover, it shifted the epistemological center of the world from China to Joseon Korea. It sought the solution of the contemporary social conflicts and problems in the historical and social context of Joseon, as it dealt with a variety of fields like politics, geology, law, astronomy, and literature.

As a revolution in medieval society, Silhak can be characterized as follows. It has been pointed out that Silhak was an ideology that focused on contemporaneous goals and hoped to foster a national consciousness, that is, a consciousness of progress and of national sovereignty. It has also been pointed out that as the earnestness with

which existential human life was pursued came to be perceived in a practical way, earnestness and practicality as part of human nature came to constitute the foundation of Silhak thought. It has been defined as a reformed Confucianism (Keum 2000). One of the characteristics of Silhak is that it takes the political, economic, and social problems of the times as its basic concerns, based on humanism. Thus we can describe Silhak as a form of Confucianism indigenous to Korea.

Even though Silhak was a unique and distinctive epistemology that had strong potential to be widely used to meet a “dynamic balance” of the time, it did not continue to develop due to its limited role in politics. Silhak scholars were not successful in actual politics, so their ideas did not have a chance to be used. During the Japanese colonial period, from 1910 to 1945, much of the traditional philosophy and fundamental social principles were distorted or even became extinct. Consequently, Korea has modernized through a Western-oriented, one-way form of development.

Ideology and Ontology of Silhak

In the latter period of the Joseon dynasty, society experienced social and economic change and Confucianism lost its practicality and novelty. Under this disorder, a tendency toward practical learning emerged and developed. Cheon (1979) reported that there were several conditions that made this tendency dominant during seventeenth to nineteenth century Korea: first, the criticism of the ruling Neo-Confucian philosophy; second, a realistic effort directed at overcoming the general upheaval and chaos in society following the Japanese invasion of Korea from 1592 to 1598; and third, the impact of Western civilization that was felt via China.

The Neo-Confucian tradition following Zhu Xi created a rigid orthodox system of Joseon society. The moral leadership of Confucianism deteriorated into a suppressive ruling ideology, and the governing system lost its practicality and flexibility for humans, and strife between parties increased. Joseon also suffered from invasions

by Japan (1592-1598) and China (1636). This experience of hardship caused several scholars to address the structural problem of contemporary society and to seek fundamental social reform. Silhak challenged the existing Confucian system, which was in urgent need of societal and economic reform. The upheaval and chaos of the late Joseon dynasty is rooted in economic changes. The traditional closed and self-sufficient economy based upon agriculture transferred to a commodity and monetary market-based economy for the first time. The social hierarchy collapsed and a variety of needs and desires arose.

The Korean experience with the introduction of Western world was very different from that of the Chinese or the Japanese. Simply because Korea was located to the north of the trade routes to China, few Westerners visited Korea before the opening of the country in 1876. Thus Koreans from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century had to learn about the West through indirect contacts, whereas the Chinese and the Japanese had ample opportunities to learn directly from the Western missionary-scientists who came to their countries. Nonetheless, with the beginning of the nineteenth century the influence of Western science in Korea became quite obvious (Park 1990). Western knowledge became a strong influence in developing the scientific and practical features of Silhak.

Lee (1966), one of the primary early Silhak scholars, presented a scheme of Silhak. The first is the School of Administration and Practical Usage (*gyeongse chiyong*). This school of the early half of the eighteenth century, founded by Yi Ik (pen name: Seongho, 1629-1690), concentrated on various types of institutional reform, especially of the land system and government organization. They asserted that learning should work to enhance practical benefits in governing. The School of Profitable Usage and Benefiting the People (*iyong husaeng*) followed in the latter half of the eighteenth century. This school, developed by Hong Dae-yong (pen name: Damheon, 1731-1783), Bak Ji-won (pen name: Yeonam, 1737-1805) and Bak Je-ga (pen name: Chojeong, 1750-1805), was mainly concerned with technological reform. They insisted that a bountiful economy needed to

come first, and also sought the development of commerce and industry, the introduction of foreign technology, the vitalization of overseas trade, and increased productivity. The last is the School of Seeking Evidence (*silsa gusi*). Kim Jeong-hui (pen name: Chusa, 1786-1856) concentrated on intellectual practicality based upon bibliographical study.

Dasan (pen name: Jeong Yak-yong, 1762-1836) is generally referred to as a “synthesizer” of these three schools of Silhak. He is also known as a descendant of Yi Ik. His own worldview was systematized through the liberal acceptance of diverse tendencies. Dasan’s “practical study” required knowledge of the “root” (*bon* 本). He considered land reform policy the “root” of his time. Farming was still the dominant industry of the Joseon dynasty, but many people suffered because land policy was unequal and land was concentrated in the hands of a few people. His statecraft, revealed in his books, is based on Confucian understanding (Shin 1983, 1986). He explained that “governing the people” did not mean domination or ruling but “service to the people” based on the love of humanity. Dasan was especially interested in the welfare of the common people. He subscribed to the traditional Confucian episteme that individuals and society are synthesized in a whole. He thought problems were caused by a distorted understanding of human nature, such as separated concentration on individual introspection, or insurance of social order. So, his theme was the restoration of mutual dependence and unity of the individual and society. His philosophy of human and society were organically connected to him (Keum 2001).

The pragmatic value of the unity in Silhak is that these separate modes of operation are realized in a continuous process through which a world is operationalized to find an account of the moral relations that obtain among things, which will weave them into a unity of a stable system within shared attitudes. This attitude is sympathetic apprehension for others that does not require synthetic agreement or homogeneity. Besides trampling dichotomous worldviews, Dasan rejected the universalism that was common to Plato, Kant, and Hegel’s idea of immanent teleology—that “the real is the rational and

the rational is the real” (Rorty 1992, 585), as well as the conceptions of Cartesian thought, which are all quite common Western ideologies. In this regard, Dasan thought the pursuit of classical monocentric rationality to be, at best, like the experience of Isaiah Berlin’s metaphor—the scattered parts of a jigsaw puzzle (Berlin 1991). We suspect Kant’s metaphor that “out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made,” may be a position close to the classical Silhak thinkers’ perspective. Thus dichotomous and universal logic is replaced in Silhak by logic of use, also known as the logic of the situation, which is parallel in many planning practices.

However, the most important thing Dasan established was his concept of symbiotic relationships among situations (KNCU 2004). It encouraged the kind of variety-in-unity characteristic of rationality or single-mindedness of purpose and diversity of inquiry, which sustains homeostasis among situational or contextual differences. For Dasan, all situations were mediated or related (Setton 1997), but human situations only found meaning through their relations, and all human situations were characterized by what might be called interaction. That is, they do not exist atomically, unrelated to other events, but interact as parts of a field or a community. Among all the creatures that are involved in complex patterns of behavior with other creatures, human beings exhibit this behavior in the most complex way and have transformed biological instincts through cultural experience. Dasan accepts conflict as an inevitable factor among different individuals and groups (KNCU 2004). Thus the society envisioned by Dasan inevitably rests upon persuasion, upon the ability to convince and be convinced, and upon the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. In other words, the primary transactions of a democratic polity would consist of activities such as bargaining, negotiating, and persuasive argument, rather than regulation or command.

Scientific Nature and Social Reality of Silhak

As a branch of empirical philosophy, Silhak thinkers held science in

high esteem, and the results of science largely parallel modernistic thought (Chun 1982). However, they respected not only the results of science, but the scientific method and scientific modes of thinking as well. In other words, they respected science not just for its results but as an instrument or means for shaping human social life.

Indeed, the tremendous power inherent in science can be good or bad according to the purpose for which it is utilized. Science has not always been utilized for good purposes alone (cf. Sarason 1984). That science has been utilized for evil purposes is quite apparent in the relationships between modern warfare and scientific technology, and between economic and social crises such as "homelessness" (cf. Lovekin 1993).

Silhak emphasizes the instrumentality of science and stresses that it should be used for good purposes. Dasan vehemently promotes social reform by means of agreements through intelligent dialogue. He was optimistic about reform through consensus because he believed in the ability of science to increase productivity to such an extent that it would enable all people to live in abundance.

Asserting that science should be used not only for inquiry in the natural world but also for the solution of human social problems (Cho 1986), thinkers of Silhak (particularly for Dasan) recommended that we live in accordance with the reasonable modes of thinking that constituted the basis of science. The most fundamental aspect of the scientific method was the hypothesis-driven method parallel to Popper's falsification theory in modern science. This called for the humble attitude of scientists not to seek absolute and immutable truths, but to regard hypotheses as temporary, subject to verification and revision in the future.

The ethic of Silhak teaches that the application of this humble attitude to practical life is the correct course for the growth of individuals and the development of their society. This conviction among Silhak thinkers does not encourage hesitation and skepticism in human conduct so much as it recommends constant criticism of the present, and renews efforts to introduce change in a better direction.

Silhak thinkers conceived the role of the scientist as being an

actor within the world rather than a mere observer of it, as Susman (1978, 596) suggested. The biggest supporter of this was Dasan, who conceived his ideas of Silhak under the decisive influence of Yi Ik (Song 1972). Dasan believed that the most fundamental mission of philosophers was to hold aloft the torch directing the course of history. However, Silhak neither offered itself as a panacea nor pursued perfection. Silhak never suggested a particular remedy for every ill. It did not have a secret remedy, nor did it promise to solve all of the varied and complex problems facing society. In this sense, Silhak was not the name of a certain system consisting of definitive conclusions. Even when the same methodology was applied, Silhak encouraged us to expect some difference in conclusions, according to the application of the methodology and its particular point of emphasis. However, the notion that Silhak was limited solely to instrumentalism is ill-founded. More importantly, the pragmatic way of thinking in Silhak was action-oriented (Shin 1986). Tracing its practical consequences and energizing a deeply moral concern distinguished it from mere instrumentalism.

Silhak thinkers were not the first to believe that the philosopher's mission was to seek out principles of practice to cope with historical realities. The tradition linking philosophy directly to the reality of life dates back to the pre-Socratic era. However, the professionalization of the sciences, which has become conspicuous in recent times, and the tendency among intellectuals to lose vigor and seek indulgence in ease, have encouraged philosophers to shun social reality and to engross themselves in philosophy for the sake of philosophy. That Silhak sought to emphasize the historical and social missions of philosophy in the midst of such currents is a fact worth mentioning. Silhak regarded the philosopher's role as "not to solve the problems of philosophers but rather to deal with the problems of men" (Kalton 1975). Thus Silhak was regarded as a philosophy of action that seeks to make room for the application of creative intelligence in the public realm. This line of reasoning exhibited many similarities with American pragmatists (Scheffler 1974, 187).

Implications of *Silhak* in Planning

Society and Planning

Pluralists emphasize the constraints imposed on the state by a wide range of groups and maintain that decision-making is largely a reflection of the preferences of these groups. In this view, it is said that pluralism is a typical model in explaining the liberal democratic system, which is ruled by many in the name of the many. Naturally democracy has thrived on uncertainty (Dahl 1995). It relies on ad-hoc action and muddling through as necessary mechanisms for handling innumerable unformulated contingencies.

In this respect, democratic polities have promoted conflicting life-forms defined as pluralist power structure (Fay 1975): polyarchy (Lindblom 1977), pluralism (Dahl 1989), or interested group liberalism (Lowi 1969). All these ideologies guaranteed conflicting life-forms and power structure, opened up public discourse for an ever-widening range of participants, and maximized the public's role in defining the terms in which indeterminacy can be legitimately terminated. Thus the democratic regime suggests that public policy should not be conceived of as an isolated, single act, but as a dynamic social process that may be an aggregation of numerous epistemic ideologies.

On the other hand, nondemocratic polities seek to expunge uncertainty by way of unviable consensus. They fear discord, value consensus, and are more likely to favor a monopoly of the terminological means of production of social reality. Democratic polities give room for honest differences of opinion, maximize every opportunity, like Adam Smith's economy, and protect minorities from the aspirations of the majority. This is why most *Silhak* thinkers do not argue for consensus for depicting democracy, and unhesitatingly accept dissent in the everyday situational conflicts of life (KNCU 2004). Instead, reconciled democratic local communities functioning as indivisible parts of the whole are enhanced by the differences of opinion arising from differences of judgment based on the accreditation of the

ignorance, bias, and levity of the masses.

Participatory democracy from the above public environment is inherently a major pole of the democratic systems (Dahl 1989; Lindblom 1979) and actively mediated planner's arbitration is a necessary tool for every planning practice in this political setting. How about the unity of symbiosis *Dasan* envisioned in this situation? He believed the life-world to be composed of a plurality of individuals with non-reciprocal beliefs and desires; however, *Dasan's* symbiosis is not just an ideology, but a substantive one, as Shin (1983, 1986) argues. This is the rationality that most scholars in the *Silhak* School have envisioned. If planning does not simply mean to convince reasonable readers through argument, but to persuade general audiences through persuasion and characterization of written analytical language, *Dasan's* symbiosis may be an important prerequisite for the practical organization of democratic action in the conduct of public life, in which most planners are engaged.

Implications of Silhak on Planning Practices

If planning, which is understood as the struggle of intellectual ideologies, enters the realm of society, a high degree of uncertainty often emerges in both its outcome and in the paths it follows. Even though the results may manifest largely as conceived at the starting point, the track on which a certain project progresses is not as straight as the planners may have hoped for. Much more often, the intricacy and unpredictability of decisions and events frustrate the original design. In all cases, how planners operate within the boundaries set by political realities varies with the style of planning that they adopt.

Two views are generally common to their epistemic social theories. First, they all assert the establishment of a bright society where the rights and interests of the masses are protected by eliminating injustice and corruption derived from the monopolistic, capitalist economic system. Second, they assert a method of agreement through peaceful persuasion or "peaceful incremental change," which has always caused important structural changes in most democratic soci-

eties, namely, a democratic method for the elimination of the existing social dilemma. There is no single ethical theory, however, that pragmatist methodology will inevitably arrive at. Silhak sides as well with conservatism—tender-minded, as it does with radicalism—tough-minded. It is, however, possible to find a certain general trend common among social theories actually developed by classical Silhak thinkers such as Dasan.

The reason for believing that Silhak is in harmony with the ideology of planning is that the two are both based on humanism, in the broad sense of the term. Planning, in one sense, places a faith in human dignity, and is a process of development that engages the spirit of humanity against a philosophical background aspiring toward the prosperity of mankind and the growth of individuals through a rational social life. Silhak can be described as a faith devoted to the discovery of the source of value in human experience and humanity, and hence it is akin to the humanitarian aspect of planning. This commonness serves as ample basis for inferring that Silhak will lead us to a view of life that affirms and promotes the progress of planning.

Should planners be content in an environment without context or sense of place? Most contemporary planning theorists do not hold this view (Forester 1993; Friedmann 1987; Hoch 1988). In this regard, we conclude by suggesting that planners need to actively mediate any policy discourse with its own epistemological backgrounds. This stance is particularly important for planning practice in Korea. Here, we do not deny the importance of good intentions even in the apolitical, technical stances, but do question, as Verma (1995) points out, “its sufficiency as a criterion for ethical behavior.” This conclusion may be regarded as a limitation which planners inevitably have in the relationship between planners and epistemologies in Korea. However, no particular planners’ role has yet been identified around which there could be consensus in recognizing it as a dominant paradigm in this society. Moreover, if planning is inherently future-oriented, a fact that can be easily observed in every planning context, it does matter what images of the future planners hold, quite

apart from a consideration of the political structure, even in an authoritarian society. These images consist of expectations of what would come about if they did nothing, of what could happen if they made choice A or B, and above all, of what ideologies guide their actions.

Conclusion

We believe that, in all societies and at all times, there are human complications and social problems that need to be addressed. In this sense, philosophy is the most inclusive attempt by human intelligence to resolve the problems that affect a society in its particular historical context. This seems unequivocally clear to the classical thinkers of Silhak. For instance, Dasan asserts that the philosopher’s mission is to present a guiding principle for the solution of fundamental problems in human society arising from changes over time.

Most of the time, planning theorists devote their time to examining metaphysical concepts born of the imagination of purely academic philosophers (just as one example, the book *Rationality in Planning: Critical Essays on the Role of Rationality in Urban and Regional Planning*, which is one of the mostly cited books in planning articles, addresses Weber, Habermas, Feyerabend, Offe, etc.). Of course, there is absolutely no need to stick to a purely domestic tradition, which can lead to chauvinism or jingoism. However, such an unconditional subservience to a single-minded (or modernistic) tradition is very dangerous, since this ignores the historical tradition and conditions in which each society is situated. We should remember the epistemological basis of each society and its influence on society. Its paths in history can further indicate the direction of the current world because every social transformation is determined by its epistemological features. Taylor (1998) remarked that “the history of ideas is more than just history, that is, that ideas born out of historical context have a relevancy to a contemporary problem.”

Needless to say, there have been situations in which planners

ignore historical realities. Planners should play the role of forerunners in advance of planning theory, not necessarily when they take up actual problems as the object of their research, but more basically, when the contents of their theory correspond to the demand of their times and situations. In this regard, Mumford (1938, 390) says, "plans that do not rise out of real situations, plans that ignore existing institutions, are of course futile: mere utopias of escape." Giddens (1985) also criticized a theory as a "grand theory" if it pays little attention to the significance of webs of difference and connection over contextual situations. This is particularly problematic in planning practices in that it is not what planning holds in theory that makes it particularly different from other disciplines, but how it applies and actually uses the theory within the broader context of societal well-being.

As a philosophy of social change, Silhak seeks dynamic balance on the basis of the social and historical context of Korea. The values of Korean traditional Silhak epistemology would have many implications on the normative aspects of planning theory. First of all, it argues that society should be understood as a part of an organism that has reciprocal relationships between its components. Second, the pragmatic tendency of Silhak is substantive, in that it does not pursue a technical methodology, but a method of improving peoples' lives and national power efficiently and practically within its organic realities. Silhak's adaptation in a changing society to meet the dynamic balance through material and spiritual reform is the third implication for the normative aspects of planning practices in Korea.

Although we attach no doubt to the possibility that planners will have a greater influence on the future directions of planning, it cannot be concluded that their influence will always take the right course. It is quite possible that even when planners are actually interested in the realities facing society, they may fabricate a theory when they are deep in the throes of a suicidal fetish, and thus they are apt to produce a result which is rather detrimental to the development of their society (cf. Hall 1982; Lee and Lim 1995).

We live on one earth. However, we belong to a world that is not

of the world. Reality is a thing of the world and each society has its own concept of truth. Thus, the rationality that we can discover for ourselves and plausibly communicate to others is bound to be contextual and cultural. Moreover, it should be situational, embracing rather than denying uncertainty and dissent. Thus a planning practice is judged to be successful and reliable only in terms of a society's actual practices. This is particularly important in planning practices since it is not the theoretical aspects of planning that makes it different from other disciplines, but how theory is used and actually applied.

REFERENCES

- Berlin, I. 1991. *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. New York: Alfred A. Knoff.
- Chan, Joseph. 1997. "A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights." In *Confucianism and Human Rights*, edited by Theodore De Bary and Tu Weiming. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Chattopadhyaya, D. P. 1992. "Rationality: Transparent, Cultural, and Transcendental." *Philosophy East & West* 42: 561-579.
- Cheng, C. Y. 1991. *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Cheon, Gwan-U (Chön, Kwan-u). 1966. "The Formation and Development of Korean Silhak." *Sasanggye* 3: 10-17.
- _____. 1979. *Geunse joseonsa yeongu* (The Study of the Modern History of Joseon). Seoul: Ilchokak.
- Cho, Sung-eul. 1986. "Dasan on the Social Hierarchy." *Korea Journal* 26.2 (February): 32-43.
- Choi, Min-Hong. 1978. *A Modern History of Korean Philosophy*. Seoul: Seong Moon Sa.
- Chöng, Ch'ang-yöl. 1982. "Disputes and Tasks in Research on the Thought of Silhak." *Korea Journal* 22.11: 4-12.
- Chun, Shin-yong. 1982. *Korean Thought*. Seoul: Si-sa-yong-o-sa Publishers.
- Dahl, R. A. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1995. "Justifying Democracy." *Society* 32: 43-49.

- _____. Fay, B. 1975. *Social Theory and Political Practice*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Ferninand, S. 1992. "Signs and Language." In *Culture and Society*, edited by J. C. Alexander and S. Seidman. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Forester, J. 1980. "Critical Theory and Planning Practice." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46: 275-286.
- _____. 1981. "Question and Organizing Attention: Toward a Critical Theory of Planning Administrative Practice." *Administration and Society* 13: 161-205.
- _____. 1982. "Planning in the Face of Power." *Journal of American Planning Association* 48: 67-80.
- _____. 1989. *Planning in the Face of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1993. *Critical Theory, Public Policy, and Planning Practice*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Friedmann, J. 1987. *Planning in the Public Domain: From Knowledge to Action*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Giddens, A. 1985. "Jurgen Habermas." In *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, edited by Q. Skinner. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, P. 1982. *Great Planning Disasters*. California: University of California Press.
- Han, U. K. 1961. *Ijo hugi-ui sahoe-wa sasang* (The Society and Philosophy of the Late Joseon Dynasty). Seoul: Eul Yoo Publishing.
- Hong, Sung-Chick. 1978. "Historical Development of Korean Social Science." *Korea Journal* 18.5: 32-43.
- Hoch, J. C. 1988. "A Pragmatic Inquiry." *Society* 26: 27-35.
- Kalton, M. 1975. "An Introduction to Silhak." *Korea Journal* 15.5: 29-46.
- _____. 1999. "Extending the Neo-Confucian Tradition: Questions and Reconceptualization for the Twenty-First Century." In *Confucianism and Ecology: the Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, 77-101. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press for the Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions.
- Keum, Jang-Tae. 2000. *Confucianism and Korean Thoughts*. Seoul: Jimoon-dang.
- _____. 2001. *Dasan silhak tamgu* (Research on Silhak of Dasan). Seoul: Sohaksa.
- _____. 2002. *Jeong Yak-yong*. Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press.

- _____. 2004. "Human Liberation in Early Modern Korean Thought." In *Korean Philosophy: Its Tradition and Modern Transformation*, edited by Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 399-419. Seoul: Hollym.
- Kim, Y. S. 2000. *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.
- Koh, Young-jin. 2003. "Neo-Confucianism as the Dominant Ideology in Joseon." *Korea Journal* 43.4 (winter): 59-86.
- Koo, Mhan-ock (Ku, Man-ok). 2005. "Joseon-hugi silhakjeok jayeon-gwan-ui daedu-wa jeon-gae" (The Rise and Development of Silhak's View on Nature in the Late Joseon Dynasty). In *Hanguk silhak sasang yeongu* (Studies on the Thoughts of Silhak in the Late Joseon Dynasty), edited by Korea Study Center of Yonsei University, vol. 4, 101-169. Seoul: Hae-an.
- Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), ed. 2004. *Korean Philosophy: Its Tradition and Modern Transformation*. Elizabeth, NJ: Hollym.
- Lee, SeongWoo, and Lim KyungSoo. 1995. "The Planning and Political Decision Making Process in Korea: Two Million Housing Plan—Its Structural Network in Planning and Political Economy." *SeongKyul University Journal* 24: 353-368.
- Lee, Woo-Sung (Yi, U-seong). 1966. *Silhak-iran mueosin-ga?* (What Is Silhak?). Seoul: Sin Donga.
- _____. 1979. "The Rise of Silhak Thought." In *Korean Thoughts*, edited by Chun Sihng-Yong, 5-64. Seoul: International Cultural Foundation.
- Lindblom, E. C. 1977. *Politics and Markets*. BasicBooks.
- _____. 1979. *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press.
- Lovekin, D. 1993. "Technology and Culture and the Problem of the Homeless." *The Philosophical Forum* 24: 363-375.
- Lowi, T. J. 1969. *The End of Liberalism*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc.
- Margolis, J. 1995. "Beyond Postmodernism: Logic as Rhetoric." *Argumentation* 9: 21-31.
- Mumford, L. 1938. *The Culture of Cities*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Naess, A. 1973. "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary." *Inquiry* 16.
- Neufville, J. I. 1987. "Knowledge and Action: Making the Link." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 6: 86-92.
- Park, Seong-Rae. 1990. "History of Science in Korea: A Survey." *Korea Jour-*

- nal 30.7: 18-25.
- Ro, Y. C. 1989. *The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi Yulgok*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Rorty, R. 1992. "A Pragmatist View of Rationality and Cultural Difference." *Philosophy East & West* 42: 581-596.
- Roweis, S. T. 1983. "Urban Planning as Professional Mediation of Territorial Politics." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 1.1: 139-162.
- Sarason, S. B. 1984. "If It Can Be Studied or Developed, Should It Be?" *American Psychologist* 39: 477-485.
- Scheffler, I. 1974. *Four Pragmatists: A Critical Introduction to Pierce, James, Mead, and Dewey*. New York: Humanities Press.
- Setton, M. 1997. *Chong Yagyong: Korea's Challenge to Orthodox Neo-Confucianism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Shin, Yong-Ha (Sin, Yong-ha). 1983. "Dasan Jeong Yak-yong-ui jeongjeonje toji gaehyeok sasang" (Jeong Yak-yong's Thoughts on the Jeongjeonje Land Reform). In *Kim Cheol-jun baksa hoegap ginyeom sahak nonchong* (Commemorative Collection of Treatises on Historical Science on the 60th Anniversary of Ph.D. Kim Cheol-jun), 683-702. Seoul: Jisiksanupsa.
- _____. 1986. "On Dasan's Land Reform Thought." *Korea Journal* 26.2 (February): 44-57.
- Song, Chu-Yong. 1972. "Practical Learning of Yi Ik." *Korean Journal* 12.8 (August): 38-45.
- Song, Young-bae (Song, Yeong-bae). 2004. *Dongseo cheolhak-ui gyoseop-gwa dongseoyang sayu bangsik-ui chai* (Exchanges of Philosophical Ideas and the Difference of Thinking Modes between the East and the West). Seoul: Nonhyeong.
- Susman, G. I. 1978. "An Assessment of the Scientific Merits of Action Research." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 23: 582-603.
- Taylor, R. L. 1998. "Companionship with the World." In *Confucianism and Ecology: the Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, 37-58. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University.
- Tu, Weiming. 1998. "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature." In *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, 105-122. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University.
- Tucker, M. E. 2003. "Ecological Themes in Taoism and Confucianism." In *Worldviews, Religion, and the Environment—A Global Anthology*, edited by Richard Foltz and Thomson Wadsworth, 217-223. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

- Verma, N. 1995. "The Systemic Nature of Professional Ethics." In *Planning Theory*, edited by S. L. Mandelbaum, Mazza, and R. Burchell. Rutgers: CURP Press.
- Webster, C. 2004. "The New Institutional Economics and the Evolution of Modern Urban Planning." *Town Planning Review* 76.4: 455-484.
- White, L. 1967. "The Historic Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." *Science* 155.

GLOSSARY

Bukhak	北學
gyeongse chiyong	經世致用
iyong husaeng	利用厚生
Silhak	實學
silsa gusi	實事求是
Tianzhu shiyi (Ch.)	天主實義
xiru (Ch.)	西儒
yin/yang (Ch.)	陰/陽
(Ch.: Chinese)	