Daesoonjinrihoe in Korean New Religious Movements*

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I. Introduction

Western powers and authorities started to explore the nations of different continents in modern history. Asian countries likewise were under the wave of colonialization and the religious transformation. Among the nations of East Asia, the situation of Korea was not different.

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* Although Daesoonjinrihoe is the most common name for the new religion, the religious organization has been expressed in many ways, such as the Daesun Jinrihoe, Fellowship of Daesoon truth, Daesunjinrihui, Daesun Chilihoe, Daesunchiliihoe, Daesoon Jinrihoe, Taesunchillihoe, and Daeson Chillihoe. The terms of Daesoonjinrihoe, Daesoonjinri, Daesoon, Daesoon Truth, or Fellowship of Daesoon will be generally used for the new religion or their doctrine in this paper unless otherwise specified.
The early modern time was the historical era where the new religious movements initially emerged into the feudal state of the Joseon Dynasty. Among the major new religions of Korea, the Jeungsan movement was based on the teachings of Jeungsan Kang Il-Sun (1871-1909) and established in the late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries. The legacy and tradition of the founder was transmitted by the denomination called, Daesoonjinrihoe (or the Fellowship of Daesoon), one of the fastest growing groups in the Jeungsan movement. The Daesoon organization is composed with five major Temple complexes,1) 200 Fellowship Halls (called, Hoegwan), and 2000 community centers (called, Podeokso) across the nation. The sacred site called Yeong Dae (altar) where the founder (the supreme God, Sangje) and the deities of the Universe are worshipped is the allocated space at the Temples with various functional facilities.2) The Fellowship Halls (called, Hoegwan) regionally function as the place for members conducting sacred activities including religious rites, training, and organizing social campaigns. The community centers for the propagation of virtue (Podeok) are the places where groups of people worship and learn about necessary information locally.3)

Like the Japanese new religion of Soka Gakkai promoting kōsen rufu as a practical mission of escape from poverty, illness, and social strife,4) the Daesoon Truth is one of the most influential

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1) They are located in Yeoju, Junggok, Toseong, Pocheon, and Jeju.