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Chǒng Yag-yong's cosmogonic idea and Matteo Ricci's influence shown in his interpretation of the *Zhouyi*

— A compromise between creationism and evolutionism

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1. Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to explain how Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*(天主實義¹⁾, k.*Ch'ŏnjusirŭi*, *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) had an influence on the formation of Tasan(茶山) Chŏng Yag-yong(丁若鏞)'s cosmogony. Ricci's impact on Tasan was so wide and profound that it is impossible to give overall discription of Tasan's philosophical thought without mentioning Ricci's influence. Especially, *Tianzhushiyi*'s influence with regard to the cosmogony was very great. It was I Byŏk(李薺, 1754~1785) who introduced the book to Tasan and led him onto the new path of Christianity. On the 15th, April, 1784, Chŏng Yag-yong, at the age of twenty-three, heard the story from I Byŏk about the beginning of heaven and earth when he was on the way back to Hanyang(漢陽) by boat along the Han River(漢江) after the memorial service of the death of the eldest brother's wife. Probably, the story might have been related to the creation of the world in the Bible.

* This paper was presented in the conference that was held in the University of San Francisco from the 25th July until the 26th July in 2018. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Ricci Institute of the University of San Francisco and Tasan Cultural Foundation. The main theme of the conference was "Tasan visits Ricci's Study" and my paper was presented by the title of "Matteo Ricci's influence on the formation of Tasan's cosmogony." The present paper is revised and supplemented again in order to submit to the 35th edition of *The Journal of Tasan Studies*.

1) The romanization rule of the Chinese word follows the Chinese Hanyu Pinyin system. But Korean personal names and book titles are romanized according to the rule of McCune-Reischauer system even if it is written in Chinese character. The c. is the abbreviation code of the Chinese and k. is that of the Korean.

Looking back on the past in the *Epitaph for the second eldest brother*(先仲氏墓誌銘), Tasan recalled that he had been so amazed at that time as if he had seen the immense infinite milky way in the sky.²⁾ As soon as he returned to Hanyang, Tasan borrowed the *Tianzhushi* from I Byök, and was baptized Apostle(使徒) John(若望) at I Byök(李櫟)'s house by I Sŭng-hun(李承薰) who was his elder sister's husband.³⁾ But all of a sudden, the incident occurred in Chinsan(珍山) village of the Chŏlla Province(全羅道) in 1791, when Yun Chi-ch'ung(尹持忠), bereaved of his mother, burned the ancestral tablet and refused to perform the ancestral memorial service in a traditional Confucian way. Faced with severe persecution, Tasan had no choice but to keep the distance from the Catholic Church. In 1797, Tasan submitted a petition to the King Chŏngjo(正祖) and expressed his desire to resign from the official position of tongbusŭngji(同副承旨, sixth deputy royal secretary). In the petition, Tasan defended himself against the widespread rumor that he had been involved for a long time in the Catholic Church and declared that he had cut off all relations with it after the Chinsan incident. Based on Tasan's *Self-written Epitaph*(自撰墓誌銘), Kim Sang-hong(金相洪) insisted that Tasan completely abandoned the Christian faith since the Chinsan

2) *Epitaph for the second eldest brother*(先仲氏墓誌銘), *Chŏngbon Yŏyudangchŏnsŏ*, Vol.3, p.247.

3) “曾於甲辰年間, 與若鏞會於李藥家, 而若鏞蟲惑於此術, 請數領洗於矣身.” Kim Okhŭi, *Kwangam Ibyŏk's Thought of Western Learning*, Catholic Press, 1979, p.29.

incident. But the vestiges of the Western Learning that had taken root in his youth does not seem to have been completely wiped out from his mind since the Chinsan incident. As Tasan confessed, the western evil doctrines(西洋邪說) penetrated into the depth of the subconsciousness and took root in the ground with its entangled branches just like the oil or water soaked into the soil. Judging from Tasan's writings that was written during the exile, it is no doubt that *Tianzhushiyi* should have exerted a continuous effect on the formation of Tasan's philosophical view. When King Chǒngjo(正祖) asked about the eighty questions regarding the *Zhongyong*(中庸, Doctrine of the Mean) in 1784, Tasan replied by using the term such as *ziyouzhiwu*(自有之物, k.chayujimul, "existence by itself") and *yifuzhipin*(依附之品, k.ũibujiip'um, "attributes depending on other things"). It is very probable that Tasan could have borrowed these terms from Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*, in which the former matches with 'zilizhe'(自立者, k.charipcha, "that which is established to itself") and latter accords with 'yilaizhe'(依賴者, k.ũiroeja, "that which depends upon something else").⁴⁾ When Tasan published *Chungyonggangũibo*(中庸講義補, *Supplementary Explanations of the Meaning of the Doctrine of the Mean*) in Kangjin(康津) in 1814, Tasan did not unwrite these terms in spite of the apparent danger of arousing the suspicion that he could have been involved in the Western Learning. The influence

4) It was Jacques Gernet who translated *zilizhe*(自立者) literally as "that which is established to itself" and *yilaizhe*(依賴者) as "that which depends upon something else."

of Western Learning is especially conspicuous in *Maengjayoŭi*(孟子要義, *Essential Meaning of Mencius*) which had been completed in 1814. Besides, Tasan's definition of 'Shangdi'(上帝, k.sangje) in *Ch'unch'ugojing*(春秋考徵, *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals*) echoes the notion of the tianzhu(天主, k.ch'ŏnju, Lord of Heaven) in the first chapter of Ricci's *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. In *Ch'unch'ugojing*, Tasan defined the Shangdi as a deity that encompassed the role of 'zaohua(造化)', 'zaizhi(宰制)' and 'anyang(安養)' for the all creatures.⁵⁾ Such definition is strikingly similar with the description of tianzhu(天主) in Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*.⁶⁾ The drafted edition of *Ch'unch'ugojing*(春秋考徵) that first appeared in 1808 continued to be revised until it was finally completed in 1833. Therefore, we can infer that Ricci's influence lasted up to Tasan's old age.

Ricci's *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* had brought about the fundamental change in Tasan's worldview. Tasan presented the philosophical view which is remarkably different from the Neo-Confucianism. The *Tianzhushiyi*(天主實義) had an important

5) "Who is Shangdi? He is outside heaven, earth, and human beings. He is the maker of heaven, earth, gods, people, and ten thousand things, and he is the one who rules and nurtures them." (上帝者, 何? 是於天地神人之外, 造化天地神人萬物之類, 而宰制安養之者也.) *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, *Chŏngbon Yŏyudangchŏnsŏ*, Vol.14, p.301.

6) The first chapter of *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* is titled as "A Discussion on the Creation of Heaven, Earth, and all things by the Lord of Heaven, and on the way he experiences authority and sustains them." (論天主始制天地萬物而主宰安養之) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 1985, p.65.

bearing on Tasan's interpretation of the philosophical terms such as the li(理, principle), qi(氣, energy), taiji(太極, the great pole), wuji(無極, the limitless), yin-yang(陰陽) and wuxing(五行, five elements). However, it is a highly controversial issue whether Tasan embraced the creationism or not. A lot of debates went on regarding the meaning of the zaohua(造化) in the *Ch'unch'ugojing*. According to Chǒng Sun-u(丁淳佑), Tasan's usage of the 'zaohua' does not go beyond the conventional context in which it is used to express the mysterious, great power of nature.⁷⁾ In the same point of view, Paek Min-jǒng(白敏禎) also insisted that the 'zaohua' did not have the implication of the creation. In any circumstance, she insists that the zaohua has nothing to do with the power of the Shangdi, because the Shangdi does not get involved in the work of creation and his role is merely limited in controlling the phenomena of nature.⁸⁾ In her view, what Tasan meant to say was that the state of non-being constituted the essential character of Shangdi and gave birth to the all existences.

Kim Sǒn-hŭi(金宣姬) also insisted that Tasan's 'zaohua' did not connote the meaning of creation. However, she admitted that the term could be also interpreted in the context of creationism.⁹⁾ The three scholars mentioned above are of the same opinion that

7) Chǒng Sun-u, "The Heaven and Shangdi in Tasan", *The Journal of Tasan Studies*, Vol.9, 2006, p.29.

8) Paek Minjǒng, *Philosophy of Chǒng Yagyong*, Ihaksa, 2007, pp.176~181.

9) Kim Sǒn-hŭi, *Matto Ricci, Zhuxi, and Chǒng Yagyong*, Simsan, 2012, p.485.

negates the creationism in Tasan's thought. On the other hand, Ryu Ch'o-ha(柳初夏) held that 'zaohua' in Tasan's *Ch'unch'ugojing*(春秋考徵) and the *Hanwiyuiron*(漢魏遺議論, *Treatise on the Remained Commentaries of the Han and Wei Period*) should be interpreted in the light of creationism. In his view, it is Shangdi that created the primordial state of the taiji(太極, k,t'aegŭk, the great pole). But once the taiji is created, the universe operates according to the autonomous mechanism given by the Shangdi¹⁰⁾ However, Ryu Ch'o-ha(柳初夏)'s argument was not sufficient enough to gain the widespread support because he could not have provided the substantial evidences to justify his claim. Therefore, the majority of the scholars still believe that Tasan did not consider the 'zaohua' in the context of creationism. But, in my opinion, it lacks persuasion to assume that the idea of creation should not have exerted any influence on Tasan although it constitutes a crucial element in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. According to Tasan's recollection, he had an astonishing experience as if he had seen the vast, infinite, immense milkway when he heard, for the first time, about the beginning of the heaven and the earth from I Byŏk. If the story could have given such a strong intellectual impact, it should have exerted a continual influence on Tasan's thought. In *Excerpts from Lu De-ming*(陸德明)'s *Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons*(經典釋文), Tasan mentioned about the beginning

10) Ryu Cho-ha, "The Problem of Creation of the World and the Immortality of Human Soul in Chŏng Yagyong's Philosophy", *Korean Silhak Review*, Vol.6, 2003, p.151.

of the creation of Heaven and Earth(天地創造之初) and principle of the great creation(洪造之理). If Tasan didn't have the viewpoint of creationism, he wouldn't even have tried to use these words. Thus, it seems to be still significant to consider Tasan's notion of 'zaohua(造化)' in light of the creationism. Tasan's philosophical task was to compromise two doctrines of cosmogony established on a fundamentally different premise. It was because the worldview presented by *Tianzhushiyi* was essentially different from that of the Confucianism that it came as a great shock to Tasan. The *Tianzhushiyi*'s theory of "creatio ex nihilo" is based on the Genesis of the Holy Bible that said "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." On the other hand, the *Appendix*(繫辭傳) of the *Zhouyi* maintains that the taiji(太極) should be considered the first cause of the universe. It explains that universe came into existence by causa sui. Because the taiji is a self-caused cause, it does not need the intervention of the Creator. Tasan's cosmogony was based on the *Appendix of the Zhouyi* but at the same time was influenced partially by the *Tianzhushiyi*. In *Excerpts from Lu Deming*(陸德明)'s *Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons*(經典釋文), Tasan compared the creation of heaven and earth to the work of the earthenware craftsman(埴埴之家) who made the pottery out of the clay. Tasan's notion of the earthenware craftman is more like the Demiurgos in Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the the Demiurgos is depicted as the artisan God. Although Demiurgos is responsible for the creation of the physical universe, he does not invent a

raw material but imposes an order by using the given material. Therefore, Demiurgos is not identical with the Creator who made the universe out of nothing.

2. The Concept of the Artisan God

In the *Ch'unch'ugojing* (春秋考微), Tasan defined the Shangdi as the deity that conducted the role of the 'zaohua (造化)', 'zaizhi (宰制)' and 'anyang (安養)' for the all existence. The first chapter in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* is titled as follows: "A discussion on the creation of heaven, earth, and all thing by the Lord of Heaven, and on the way he exercises authority and sustains. (論天主始制天地萬物而主宰安養之)"¹¹⁾ The words of the zaohua (造化), the zaizhi (宰制), and the anyang (安養) in the *Ch'unch'ugojing* are, by and large, in accord with the shizhi (始制), zhuzai (主宰) and the anyang (安養) in the *Tianzhushiyi*. Therefore, the likelihood is that Tasan could have been influenced by the *Tianzhushiyi* in forming the concept of Shangdi. The problem is whether the zaohua could be interpreted from the standpoint of creationism or not. Although the zaohua is used in *Tianzhushiyi*, As a matter of fact, Ricci was very reluctant to use the word because it had been linked to the notion of the unfathomable, mysterious

11) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p.65.

power of the impersonal nature in the usage of the ordinary Chinese language. For that very reason, Ricci wanted to strengthen the meaning of the creation by putting the yuanzhi(原制) before the zaohua.¹²⁾ In fact, it was a matter of great concern for the Jesuit missionaries to choose the most suitable word that could convey the meaning of creation.¹³⁾ In 1584, Michele Ruggieri(羅明堅) wrote *Veritable Record of the Lord of Heaven*(天主聖教實錄), in which the fourth chapter was titled “Lord of Heaven made Heaven, Earth, Man and Matter(天主制作天地人物).”¹⁴⁾ Ten years later, the same word of ‘zhizuo’(制作) was used again by Ricci in *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*.¹⁵⁾ In Chinese everyday usage, the ‘zhizuo’ is a very common word that is frequently used, for example, in the case of craftsman’s manufacturing the things such as furniture. It

12) “The Chinese scholar says: The things in heaven and earth are most numerous and complex, and I believe that there must be One who exercises supreme wuthority over them. But how can one prove that He is in fact the creator of all things?”(中士曰：天地間物至煩至穢，信有主宰。然其原制造化萬物，何以徵也?) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.74~75.

13) F. Verbiest(南懷仁) intentionally avoided using the word of ‘zaohua(造化)’ and instead used the word like sheng(生)•zao(造)•zaozuo(造作)•zaocheng(造成)•huacheng(化成) in *Jiaoyaoxulun*(教要序論, *A Short Introduction to Catholicism*). Aleni(艾儒略), the Italian Jesuit missionary used the word, zaocheng(造成) in the tenth chapter of *The True Origin of the Ten-thousand Things*(萬物真原).

14) “Cultural Encounters of East and West, Challenge and Opportunity in the Quartercentenary of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci’s Death”, Graduate School of Theology, Sogang University, 2010, p.80.

15) “The Western scholar says: You, Sir, wish first to inquire about the One who is said to have created heaven, earth, and all things and to exercise constant authority over them.” (西士曰：子欲先詢所謂始制作天地萬物而時主宰之者。) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.70~71.

goes without saying that it was beyond the scope of imagination for the ordinary Chinese to make a massive scale of things like heaven and earth. Nonetheless, Ricci could have managed to persuade the Chinese intellectuals, arguing that the universe cannot be made by itself because a skillful artisan is needed even to construct the small building such as a theater.

A building such as theater cannot rise of its own accord, but is always completed at the hands of artisans. When one comprehends this, one comes to understand that heaven and earth cannot come into being by their own will, but must assuredly have a creator, namely, our so-called Lord of Heaven.¹⁶⁾

Although the notion of the divine artisan appears in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, it is more like a Demiurgos in Plato's *Timaeus*, i.e., an artisan-like figure who fashioned the material world.¹⁷⁾ The Demiurgos is not necessarily thought of as being the same as the Biblical God because a Demiurgos does not create the world out of emptiness but makes use of a raw matter that is already available.

16) “樓臺房屋不能自起，恒成於工匠之手。知此則識天地不能自成，定有所爲制作者，即吾所謂天主也。” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.76~77.

17) Kim Sŏn-hŭi also pointed out that the creator mentioned by Alleni and Adam Schall was similar to Demiourgos. (Kim Sŏn-hŭi, *Matteo Ricci, Zhuxi, and Chŏng Yagyong*, p. 146)

What is needed for a craftsman is the techniques of the precise measurement and a high degree of intelligence. In ancient Greece, there were many different types of craftsman such as potters, sculptors, painters, ship builders, carpenters and metalworkers. Their task was basically to put the order into the prime matter and turn the disorder into a state of harmony. What was needed for the craftsman to impose order upon the form of things was to find the proper ratio. In order to make the things in proportion, the craftsman resorted to the geometrical reason. In the *Tianzhushiyi*, this notion of the geometrical reason is expressed by the word of the lingcai(靈才) which meant the intellectual ability to distinguish between right and wrong and between that which is true and that which is false.¹⁸⁾ Ricci said that God used the same ability in order to create the universe. In order to emphasize that the universe was created in proportion to the mathematical ratio, Ricci adopted the term of dushu(度數, degrees and numbers) which had been used in the traditional Chinese astronomy. Because the celestial bodies operate very correctly at the constant degrees and numbers without a single error, it can be inferred that God used the geometric reasoning to create the universe.

Objects which lack souls and perception cannot move from their natural habitats by themselves in a regular and orderly

18) “靈才者，能辯是非別真偽。” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.68~69.

manner. If they are to move in a regular and orderly manner, it is necessary that an intelligence external to themselves should come to their aid. Now, when we observe the supreme heaven, we see that it moves from the East while the heavens of the sun, moon, and stars travel from the West. Without the slightest error, each thing follows the laws proper to it, and each is secure in its own place. If there were no Supreme Lord to control and to exercise authority [over these things] would it be possible to avoid confusion?¹⁹⁾

Since *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* had been introduced to Chosŏn, it was inevitable that the idea of the Divine Artisan should collide with the notion of the natural evolution. Yŏnam(燕巖) Pak Chi-wŏn(朴趾源) in *Yŏrhailgi*(熱河日記, *Diary on trip to Rehe*) criticized the concept of the Divine Artisan that appeared in *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. In order to refute the creationist point of view, Pak Chiwŏn borrowed a metaphor of grinding a grain in a millstone from Zhu Xi(朱熹). As the millstone turns around, some of the grains are ground very coarsely, while others are ground very finely. Likewise, everything happens in a disorderly fashion. Therefore, he insisted that the world was not

19) “物之無魂、無知覺者，必不能於本處所自有所移動，而中度數，使以度數動，則必藉外靈才以助之。……今觀上天自東運行，而日月星辰之天，自西循逆之，度數各依其則，次舍各安其位，曾無纖忽差忒焉者。倘無尊主幹旋主宰其間，能免無悖乎哉？” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.72~73.

created just like the things were made by a craftsman.²⁰⁾ Sin Hu-dam(愼後聃) also claimed that Shangdi did not create the world just as the mind did not create the body. Shangdi only presides over heaven and earth just like the human mind presides over the body. He further went on saying that the heaven and earth was, by no means, formed in a way that the carpenter builds his house.

On that point that heaven and earth are made by Heaven's Lord, it is nothing but speculation because it cannot be proven by reason or inquired into the origin in the literature. They argue that there should be a carpenter to build a house. But in my opinion, to create heaven and earth is a very different thing from man's act of building a house. That great Shangdi cannot be comparable to the carpenter. It is quite difficult to say about the creation of the world.²¹⁾

Sin Hu-dam also refuted the view that the Lord of Heaven created the universe by tosu(度數, number and degree). He doubted how the celestial tosu could have been sustained if Heaven's Lord came down into the world for 33 years.

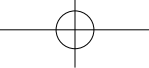
20) Pak Chi-wŏn, *Diary on Trip to Rehe Reheriji*, Vol II, p. 511.

21) “至謂天地之成由於天主之制作，則此乃於理無微，於經無稽，而特出於臆度之論也。彼雖引工匠成房屋之事以證之，然，吾恐天地之開闢，不如房屋之出於人爲也。而彼惟皇之帝亦不如此之於工匠也。開闢之事，固難言也。” Sin Hu-dam, *Tonwa's Critique on Western Learning*, pp. 142~143.

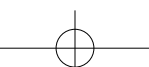
They(christians) said before, “The celestial number of degree(度數) is set by Heaven’s law and the celestial bodies are comfortably placed in the proper place without a hitch. It is because heaven is presided by the Lord of Heaven.” If that is true, it is evident that the Lord should not have left the heaven even for a single day. If God, as they claimed, descended to earth for 33 years, then the heaven would become the deserted place without the ruler during those years. Wouldn’t there be no deviation at all from the position and number of degrees(度數) of the heavenly bodies?²²⁾

Although the Divine Artisan was not a familiar idea to the Chosŏn people, it was not so difficult to bring it across to the ordinary people. As *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* began to be distributed among the Chosŏn intellectuals, the concept of the Divine Artisan spread rapidly among the Catholics. Chŏng Yak-chong(丁若鍾) who died a Catholic martyr in 1801 during the Sinyu Persecution(辛酉迫害) compared the creator to a carpenter in *The Essentials of the Lord’s Teaching*(主教要旨, *Chugyoyoji*). It was no doubt that he should have been influenced by the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*.

22) “彼嘗謂上天之度數, 各依其則, 次舍, 各安其位, 而無所差忒者, 由天主之主宰乎天, 則天主之不可一日離天也, 明矣. 而今乃降生于民間, 至於三十三年之久, 則是其三十三年之間, 天固爲無主之一閑物矣. 度數次舍能無差忒之患乎.” Sin Hu-dam, *Tonwa’s Critique on Western Learning*, pp.163~164.



Consider here a large house with a column erected underneath and a crossbeam raised above, walls fitted together on the four sides, and a door placed in front to block the wind and rain so that a person places his body in the house and comfortably. Seeing this house, how can we say that it built itself? Certainly, we will say that there was a carpenter who built it. If a person were to look at this house and say, “The column, the crossbeam, the dirt walls, the door, the windows all came together spontaneously,” we would surely say that this person has no sense. Heaven and Earth are like this house. The sky covers, the earth contains, the moon and sun illuminate, rain and dew bring abundance and nurturance, water quenches, fire heats, birds fly in the air, and crawling animals crawl the earth, so that all things are disturbed and provided for. Human beings stand in the midst of this, with the sky above their heads and earth beneath their feet, using nature and living peacefully, just as one lives peacefully in a house that has been built. Even a small house cannot build itself, but comes about only if there is a skilled artisan. Then how can this great house of heaven and earth form itself? Clearly, it comes about because there is an exceedingly divine and powerful person. Even if we cannot see the artisan, when we see the house we know that there is



an artisan who built it. Thus, though we cannot see the Lord of Heaven, when we see heaven and earth, we will know that there is most surely a master who made heaven and earth.²³⁾

It was none other than Chŏng Yag-yong's family members and relatives who widely circulated the idea of the Divine Artisan throughout the Chosŏn society.²⁴⁾ This idea seems to have influenced Tasan himself. In my view, the term “zaizhi(宰制, k.chaeje)” which Tasan used to define Shangdi(上帝, c.Shangdi) in *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals* includes the concept of “zhizuo(制作, k.chejak).”²⁵⁾ Ryu Ch'o-ha(柳初夏) argued that the word, “zaizhi(宰制)” was used in the same meaning of

23) Chŏng Yag-jong, *The Essentials of the Lord's Teaching*, p.44: pp.137~138.

24) Chŏng Ha-sang(丁夏祥) uses similar logic in *Sangjaesangsŏ*(上宰相書, *A Letter of Petition to the Prime Minister*), which is stated as follows: “Everything in heaven and earth can be compared to a house. The house has pillars and cornerstones, and girders and rafters. Also there is a door to the house, and the walls are so tightly connected with each other that there is not an dislocated place in between and round and the degree of round and square shape is determined by the regular rule. If someone says that the columns, the cornerstones, the girders, rafters, and the doors and walls of the house are accidentally aligned and stand tall by itself, people would say he is clearly insane.”(萬物, 請以房屋喻之. 彼房屋也. 有柱石, 有樑椽, 有門戶, 有墻壁・間架, 不失尺寸, 方圓, 各有制度. 若曰, 柱石・樑椽・門戶・墻壁, 渾然相合, 兀然自立, 必曰, 狂人之言也. 『上宰相書』) “萬物, 請以房屋喻之. 彼房屋也. 有柱石, 有樑椽, 有門戶, 有墻壁・間架, 不失尺寸, 方圓, 各有制度. 若曰, 柱石・樑椽・門戶・墻壁, 渾然相合, 兀然自立, 必曰, 狂人之言也.” 『上宰相書』, pp.13~14.

25) The word, ‘zaizhi(宰制, k.chaeje)’ appears not only in the *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals* but also in the *Review of Han Gangbo's Profound Talk* included in the *Yŏkhaksŏron*. In this article, Tasan said that there existed evidently a ‘zaizhizhitian(宰制之天)’ which is used in the same meaning with Shangdi.

zhuzai(主宰). He insisted that the “zaizhi(宰制)” was used to mean the control or governance in the traditional context. In the *Book of Rites*(禮書) among *Records of the Grand Historian*(史記) written by Sima Qian(司馬遷), the word appears in the phrase of “zaizhiwanwu, yishiqunzhong(宰制萬物, 役使群眾)” that means “to rule all things and thereby to lead the mass of people.” But the word, “zaizhi(宰制)” in *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals* seems to be intentionally coined by combining the “zai(宰)” of the “zhuzai(主宰)” with the “zhi(制)” of “shizhi(始制)” from *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. Here ‘shi(始)’ means the beginning(始作, k.sijak) and “zhi(制)” means the production(制作). Accordingly, the word, “zaizhi(宰制)” in *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals* should be considered to have the meaning of “to preside” and “to make” altogether. In the *Excerpts from Lu De-ming*(陸德明)’s *Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons*(經典釋文), Tasan compared the creation of the world to the process in which the potter fashioned the pottery from the clay.

The principle should have been the same in the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth. …… Now, when a pottery maker makes a pot, he first rounds a lump of clay into a ball, and after that, rotates it around so that it could gradually spread it out into a circle. And finally he completes it into a pot by shrinking it smaller at the end. I suppose that

the principle of creating the universe should have been the same.²⁶⁾

The above quote follows the passage that compares the genesis of heaven and earth from the great pole(太極) to the growth of a watermelon. Because the watermelon grows on its own, the existence of creator is not necessarily required. Unlike watermelons, it takes a manufacturer to make pottery. In Tasan's cosmogony, the two perspectives of creationism and evolutionism are sillfully combined. If we use a watermelon model, it is not necessary to assume the existence of the creator, because the evolution of the universe can be explained without assuming the existence of the creator. However, since Tasan clearly mentioned creation of heaven and earth(天地創造), it does not seem to be adequate to interpret his cosmogony only from the evolutionist point of view. But, even if there is an element of creationism in Tasan's thought, it cannot be considered the same as the "creatio ex nihilo." When the potter makes a pot, he does not produce soil, but uses the clay only as a given material. If Tasan considered Shangdi to be like Demiurgos, it is not necessary for Shangdi to create the Great Pole.

26) “天地創造之初，其法亦必如此，……今埴埴之家，其作甕盎餅甗，亦必先搏一抔，乃回乃轉，漸舒爲圓形，末復收小，以成其器，此亦洪造之理，不得不然者矣。” *Excerpts from Lu De-ming's Jingdianshiwen, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes, Chōngbōn Yōyudangchōnsō*, Vol.17, p.261.

3. The problem of “creatio ex nihilo”

In the *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals*(春秋考徵), Tasan defined Shangdi as a being that plays the role of zaohua(造化), zaizhi(宰制) and anyang(安養) for heaven, earth, spirits, humans and all living things.(上帝者, 何? 是於天地神人之外, 造化天地神人萬物之類而宰制安養之.) In the *Treatise on the Remained Commentaries of the Han and Wei Period*(漢魏遺議論), the zaohua is defined as “the visible [things with form] comes forth from the invisible [things without form](夫謂有形生於無形者, 造化之謂也).”²⁷⁾ Such definition of the “zaohua” reminds us of the proposition of “creatio ex nihilo” in Christian theology that means “the creation out of nothing.”²⁸⁾ However, the proposition of the *Treatise on the Remained Commentaries of the Han and Wei Period* is quoted from the *Yiwei Qianzaodu*(易緯乾鑿度: *Apocrypha on the Changes: Chiseling Open the Regularity of Qian*). Its proposition shows an influence from Laozi’s *Daodejing*(道德經: *Classic of the Way and Virtue*) which states that “the being comes from the non-being(有生於無).” The *Qianzaodu*(乾鑿度) explains the evolution of the universe in the six stages.

27) “夫謂有形生於無形者, 造化之謂也.” *Treatise on the Remaining Discourse of the Han and Wei Period, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes*, Chǒngbon Yŏyudangchŏnsŏ, Vol.17, p.82.

28) “When we come to the creation of all things by the Lord of Heaven, however, we find that He caused what was non-existent to existent.”(若夫天主造物, 則以無而爲有.) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.210~211.

If the youxing(有形: things with form) comes forth from the wuxing(無形: things without form), where does the Qian(乾) and Kun(坤) come from? Therefore, it says that there is a taiyi(太易, great change), taichu(太初, great origin), taishi(太始, great beginning) and taisu(太素, great simplicity). The taiyi(太易) is a state in which the qi(氣) is not yet visible. The taichu(太初) is a state in which the qi begins. The taishi(太始) is a state in which the form begins. The taisu(太素) is a state in which the zhi(質, corporeality) begins. A state in which the qi(氣), the xing(形), and the zhi(質) are provided without being separated from each other is called the hunlun(渾淪, confusion). The hunlun is a condition in which everything is mixed up and not yet separated. It is called the 'yi(易)' because it is invisible to the eye, deaf to the ear, and unobtainable even if one goes after it. The yi(易) is formless and limitless.²⁹⁾

According to the *Qianzaodu*(乾鑿度), the evolution of the universe proceeds in the following six stages and can be illustrated as below.

29) “夫有形生於無形，乾坤安從生。故曰有太易，有太初，有太始，有太素也。太易者，未見氣也。太初者，氣之始也。太始者，形之始也。太素者，質之始也。氣形質具而未離，故曰渾淪。渾淪者，言萬物相渾成，而未相離。視之不見，聽之不聞，循之不得，故曰易也。” *Treatise on the Remaining Discourse of the Han and Wei Period, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes*, Chǒngbon Yōyudangchōnsō, Vol.17, p.82.

- (1) taiyi(太易: great change), where the qi(氣) is invisible.
- (2) taichu(太初: great origin), where the qi(氣) begins to appear.
- (3) taishi(太始: great beginning), where the xing(形: form) begins to appear.
- (4) taisu(太素: great simplicity), where the zhi(質: corporeality) begins to appear.
- (5) hunlun(渾淪; confusion) or taiji(太極) where the three elements of the qi(氣), xing(形), and zhi(質: corporeality) are provided without being separated.
- (6) Qian(乾, heaven) and Kun(坤, earth) that are formed from the taiji(太極).

taiyi(太易) great change	invisible qi (未見氣)	things without form (無形者)
taichu(太初) great origin	beginning of qi (氣之始)	
taishi(太始) great beginning	beginning of form (形之始)	things with form (有形者)
taisui(太素) great simplicity	beginning of corporeal substance (質之始)	
taiji(太極: great pole) or hunlun(渾淪: confusion)	qi, xing and zhi are provided without being separated (氣形質而未離)	
Qian(乾) and Kun(坤)	heaven and earth (天地)	

Tasan maintains that the cosmogony in *Qianzaodu*(乾鑿度) should not be considered as a reliable theory. His criticism is directed to the taiyi that is the first stage of the evolution. In *Qianzaodu*, the

taiyi is defined as “the state in which the qi is invisible(未見氣).” However, even if it is invisible, the qi exists in an underlying latent state. Strictly speaking, the taiyi is not an absolute nothing but just “a formless being.”³⁰⁾ For this reason, Tasan raised a doubt whether the explanation given by *Qianzaodu* could satisfy the definition of the ‘zaohua’(造化).

The figure of the Chinese character ‘yi(易)’ contains the character of sun(日) and moon(月). This means that the beginning of Qi(氣) is already included in the state of taiyi(太易). I cannot understand why it is said that Qi is invisible. I always found it strange that the formless Tao in Chen Tuan(陳搏)’s *Taiji Diagram*(太極圖) had been respected as the formless Tao(無形之道) even though the yin and yang already appeared by the interaction of Kan(坎) and Li(離). Come to think of it, Chen Tuan(陳搏)’s theory seems to be based on the taiyi(太易) theory of the *Qianzaodu*(乾鑿度). Generally speaking, the statement that “the visible things with form(有形) comes from the invisible things without form(無形)” refers to the concept of zaohua(造化). Now, would it be fair to say that taiyi should be the root of everything? Wang Bi(王弼) said, “Di(帝: Shangdi) is the root of giving birth to the every

30) “The difference between something that is formless and nothingness is as great as that between heaven and earth.”(無形者之於無也, 隔霄壤矣.) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.106~107.

existence.” Thus, the theory of the apocryphal school is not worth mentioning.³¹⁾

From Tasan’s standpoint, both *Qianzaodu*(乾鑿度) and Zhou Dunyi(周敦頤)’s *Explanations of Taiji Diagram*(太極圖說) belong to the evolution theory in cosmogony. However, Zhou Dunyi was influenced by Chen Tuan(陳搏)’s *Taiji Diagram*(太極圖) that took its root in *Qianzaodu*. Therefore, Zhou Dunyi’s *Explanations of Taiji Diagram* has its origin in the *Qianzaodu*. Although Zhou Dunyi’s phrase, “The Non-Ultimate is, therefore, the Great Ultimate(無極而太極)” came from *Laozi*, Tasan held that the meaning could not be the same. In *Laozi*’s phrase of “Dao gave birth to One(道生一)”, the “root of zaohua”(造化之本) is not the taiji(太極) but the Dao(道). On the other hand, in Zhou Dunyi’s phrase, there is no additional “root of zaohua” except the taiji.³²⁾ Tasan, after having criticized the concept of taiyi(太易) in *Qianzaodu*, quoted Wang Bi’s statement that “Di(帝: Shangdi) was the root of giving birth to

31) “易之爲字，包函日月。是亦含氣之始，何謂未見氣乎？常怪陳希夷太極圖，坎離相交，陰陽已著，而尊之爲無形之道。其說蓋本於太易矣。夫謂有形生於無形者，造化之謂也。今以太易爲生物之本，可乎？王弼云，“帝者，生物之主”，緯家之說，不足述也。” *Treatise on the Remaining Discourse of the Han and Wei Period, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes, Chǒngbon Yōyudangchōnsō*, Vol.17, p.82.

32) “無極而太極，則是其義，雖本出於道生一三字。彼云道生一，是於太極之上，明有造化之本。若云，無極而太極，則所謂太極者，是又自然而生，無所爲本也，未論經旨得失，而老子之意，亦一變而爲異說矣。” *Review of Han Gangbo’s Talk on Profundity, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes, Chǒngbon Yōyudangchōnsō*, Vol. 17, p.110.

the every existence.” Afterwards, he mentioned that the apocrypal theory of the *Qianzaodu* should not be trusted. Then, what did Tasan intend by quoting Wang Bi? Is Wang Bi’s view in agreement with the *Qianzaodu* or against it? In order to solve this question, it is necessary to review the original paragraph. Wang Bi’s statement is found in his commentary on “The King presented his offerings to the Shangdi(王用亨於帝)” in the Second Six(六二) divinatory phrase of the Yi(益) hexagram.

The Di(帝) is the ruling Lord(主宰) that gives birth to the all existences and is the founding father(宗祖) who causes the benefits. The Lord comes from the Zhen(震) of the east direction and arranges(everything) in the Xun(巽) of the southeast direction.³³⁾

According to Wang Bi, the Di(帝) is the sovereign presider of the universe that gives birth and benefis to all creatures. In *Zhouyi Zhengyi*(周易正義: *Correct Meaning of Zhouyi*), Kong Yingda(孔穎達) interpreted the Di(帝) as the Heaven’s emperor(天帝, tiandi) that was identical with Shangdi(上帝).³⁴⁾ On the contrary, *Qianzaodu*

33) “帝者, 生物之主, 興益之宗, 出震而齊巽者也.” *The Correct Meaning of Zhouyi*, p.208.

34) Wang Bi mentioned about “giving birth to the everything(生物).” According to Paek Min-jŏng, this expression does not mean that the world was created by a Creator but that the world came into being naturally. Likewise, the meaning of ‘zaohua(造化)’ does not lie in the creation but in the Shangdi’s role of governing the change of the natural phenomena. Tasan’s concept of ‘zaohua’ shows not the “creatio ex nihilo” but

held that everything came into being naturally from the invisible thing. It becomes apparent that Tasan intended to contrast Wang Bi's creationism with the evolution theory of *Qianzaodu*. Although Wang Bi's philosophical views leaned toward Taoism on the whole, he put forward the creationist point of view at least from here. The *Qianzaodu* belongs to the lineage of the natural evolution that comes out of the Taoistic cosmogony. From Tasan's standpoint, the view of *Qianzaodu* is in accord with that of *Tianzhushiyi* because both of them maintain that "the visible things with form come out of the invisible things without form.(夫謂有形生於無形者)." However, what is definitely lacking in Taoistic cosmogony compared with *Tianzhushiyi* is the idea of creation and creator. In *Review of Han Gangbo's Profound Talk*(韓康伯玄談考), it was the creationism of *Tianzhushiyi* that was tacitly compared with Taoistic view of the 'zaohua'(造化).

What is the Dao(道)? Does it have an intellectual knowledge(靈知), Or does it have an intellectual knowledge but have no effect? Since Kong Yingda(孔穎達) said already, "There is

that the formless Shangdi constitutes the fundamental cause of the universe,(Paek Min-jŏng, *Philosophy of Chŏng Yagyong*, Ihaksa, 2007, p.181) But my opinion differs from Paek. The idea of the fundamental cause is nothing more than a philosophical concept of substance. Does Shangdi become the personal being when he plays the role of governing and nurturing the world but loses the personal character and becomes merely the abstract conceptual being when Shangdi becomes the cause of the 'zaohua'? If the Shangdi becomes the fundamental cause of the world without getting involved in the act of creation, it must be called not Shangdi but taiji.

neither mind nor its effect in the Dao(道則心跡俱無)”, not only are there no lingzhi but there are no effect of the ‘zaohua’ in the Dao. So, after all, what is the Dao they are talking about? In *Luxing*(呂刑, *Marquis of Lu on Punishments*) of the *Zhou Shu*(周書) from the *Book of Documents*(尚書, *Shangshu*), it is said, “It is not Heaven that does not deal impartially with men, but men ruin themselves(非天不中, 惟人在命).” This is the words that express the essence of truth. They(Han Gangbo and Kong Yingda) now give the name of Dao(道) to the nothing(無) and place it at the head of the saints with respect. How can one say that it is not the teachings of heresy?³⁵⁾

In the *Essential Meaning of Mencius*(孟子要義), Tasan argued that li(理) or the things without intellect(靈, ling) cannot be the basis for ruling the everything in the world. Considering that wisdom is required even for ruling a household or a small town, it goes without saying that an intellect(靈) is needed to preside over all matters of heaven and earth.

Things without an intellect(靈) cannot be the Sovereign on High in the world. If an adult in a family is ignorant and not

35) “論曰, 道是何物? 是有靈知者乎? 並與靈知而無之者乎? 既云心跡俱無, 則是無靈知, 亦無造化之跡. 究竟, 道是何物? 書曰, 非天不中, 惟人在命, 此知本之說也. 今指無爲道, 戴之於聖人之上, 非異教乎?” *Review of Han Gangbo's Talk on Profundity, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes, Chǒngbon Yōyudangchōnsō*, Vol. 17, p.108.

wise, household affairs are not handled well. If an elder in a village is ignorant and not wise, the bureaucratic affairs will not be well governed. If the One Li(理) or the Great Void(太虛, taixu) that is nothing but the absolute emptiness should be the basis for presiding over the everything in the universe, how could the affairs of heaven and earth be handled at all?³⁶⁾

In addition to the lingzhi(靈知), Tasan used many terms that included the ling(靈) such as lingming(靈明, intellectual brightness), lingshi(靈識, intellectual consciousness), linghun(靈魂, intellectual soul), xingling(性靈, innate nature of intellect). In this respect, Tasan seems to be strongly influenced by Ricci because the 'ling(靈)' was also frequently used in the *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*. As a matter of fact, Tasan's concept of lingzhi(靈知) is quite similar to Ricci's 'lingjue(靈覺: the spiritual intellect)'.

I would ask you, Sir, to look carefully at everything in the universe. Only things with intelligence produce intelligence, and only things with consciousness produce consciousness. It does happen that things with the spiritual intellect produce

36) “凡天下無靈之物，不能爲主宰。故一家之長，昏愚不慧，則家中萬事不理，一縣之長，昏愚不慧，則縣中萬事不理。況以空蕩蕩之太虛一理，爲天地萬物主宰根本，天地間事，其有濟乎？” *Essential Meanings of the Mencius*, Chǒngbon Yǒyudangchǒnsǒ, Vol.7, p.228.

stupid and unintelligent things, but I have never heard it said that things lacking spiritual intellect are able to produce things with spiritual intellect, for a result cannot be greater than its cause.³⁷⁾

According to the Neo-Confucian philosophers, there is an ontological principle of “li(理)” that underlies all phenomena in the universe. However Ricci asserted that li should not be counted as the ultimate source because it could not be thought as a real independent entity. In other words, li is not a self-subsistent substance but an attribute that does not have the spiritual intellect(靈覺, lingjue).³⁸⁾ If there are some objects that are devoid of intelligence but possess the order, it can be inferred that there must be someone who imposes the order on them.³⁹⁾ If we consider the matter carefully, we will conclude that the things on this earth are arranged and deployed in an orderly fashion, and that if there

37) “請子察乾坤之內，惟是靈者生靈，覺者生覺耳。自靈覺而出不靈覺者，則有之矣。未聞有自不靈覺而生有靈覺者也。” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.114~117.

38) “When we come to principle, however, we find a totally different situation. Since principle falls into the category of accident and cannot stand and exist on its own, how can it embrace intelligence and consciousness and become substance?”(理也者，則大異焉，是乃依賴之類，自不能立，何能包含靈覺，為自立之類乎?) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.118~119.

39) “My second argument is that if objects which are devoid of intelligence nevertheless possess order, there must be someone who imposes the order on them.”(其二曰，物本不靈，而有安排，莫不有安排之者。) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.76~77.

had not been a supremely intelligent Lord above at the beginning of creation to bestow various natures on things, they would not be able to exist in the world and find its appropriate station.⁴⁰⁾ Objects which lack souls and perception cannot move from their natural habitats by themselves in a regular and orderly manner. If they are to move in a regular and orderly manner, it is necessary that an intelligence external to themselves should come to their aid.⁴¹⁾ This was a way to prove the existence of God that Ricci borrowed from the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas.

In the Bible, it is said that “God created man in his own image. (Genesis 1:27)” Tasan’s notion of lingming(靈明, intellectual brightness) is similar to the idea of “imago Dei.” In *Supplementary Explanations of the Meaning of the Doctrine of the Mean*(中庸講義補), Tasan said that Heaven shared his capacity of lingming(靈明, intellectual brightness) with man so that they could surpass the other creatures and take pleasure from them. By contrast, Heaven gave the plant and flower only the ability to preserve their species.⁴²⁾ In *Essential Meaning of Mencius*(孟子要義), Tasan used the word of xingling(性靈) to express the innate nature of man.⁴³⁾

40) “此世間物安排布置, 有次有常, 非初有至靈之主, 賦予其質, 豈能優游於宇下, 各得其所哉.” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.80-81.

41) “物之無魂、無知覺者, 必不能於本處所自有所移動, 而中度數, 使以度數動, 則必藉外靈才以助之.” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.72-73.

42) “草木禽獸, 天於化生之初, 賦以生生之理, 以種傳種, 各全性命而已, 人則不然, 天下萬民, 各於胚胎之初, 賦此靈明, 超越萬類, 享用萬物.” *Supplement to Lectures on the Doctrine of the Mean*, Chôngbon Yöyudangchönsö, Vol.6, p.284.

43) “性理家, 每以性爲理. 故『集注』謂“人物之生, 同得天地之理以爲性”, 此所謂本然之

In *Chungyongjajam*(中庸自箴, *Self-admonitions from the Doctrine of the Mean*), Tasan used the word of 'xiaotian'(肖天) in order to refer to the sage's efforts to resemble the Heaven. The sage models himself after Heaven's movement because he wants to learn from Heaven's sincerity and constancy.⁴⁴⁾ It is natural that man should live according to the Heaven's Mandate, as the Heaven shared his intellectual brightness(靈明) with man. The sage's relationship with transcendental Heaven is possible because the sage is endowed with the Imago Dei of Heaven.

4. The Great Pole and the Watermelon Model

After Tasan had talked with I Byŏk about the beginning of the Heaven and Earth on the 15th, April, 1784, he borrowed the *Tianzhushiyi*(天主實義, *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) from him. Shortly after that, when King Chŏngjo(正祖) asked the question about the eighty issues related to *Doctrine of the Mean*, Tasan explained the concept of li(理) and qi(氣) using knowledge

性也。本然之性，無有大小尊卑之差等，特因所稟形質，有清有濁有偏有正。故理寓於氣，不得不隨而不同。『集注』曰，“人於其間，獨得形氣之正爲小異”，亦此說也。審如是也，人之所以異於禽獸者，在於形氣，不在於性靈。庶民去形氣，君子存形氣，豈孟子之本旨乎？” *Essential Meanings of the Mencius*, Chŏngbon Yŏyudangchŏnsŏ, Vol.7, p.145.

44) “箴曰，至誠無息者，天也。聖人學天既久，其德至於肖天，則其功化亦肖天。故能不見而章。天動而變，無爲而成也。篇末七引詩，亦言功化之肖天。” *Self-admonitions from the Doctrine of the Mean*, Chŏngbon Yŏyudangchŏnsŏ, Vol.6, p.268.

that he obtained from the *Tianzhushiyi*. Tasan defined the qi as “the self-subsisting thing”(自有之物) and the li as the “the dependent thing”(依附之品). Compared with Ricci’s term in *Tianzhushiyi*, the former refers to “that which is established to itself”(自立者) and the latter points to “that which depends upon something else”(依賴者).⁴⁵⁾ The origin of Ricci’s terminology can be traced back to the substance and the attribute in the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy. Although Tasan did not have the exact knowledge about the origin of the words, he seems to understand the underlying philosophical implications without difficulty.

	Tasan	Ricci	Aristotle & Aquinas
qi(氣)	自有之物	自立者	substance(substantia)
li(理)	依附之品	依賴者	accidens(attribute)

When Ricci defined the li as “that which depends upon something else”(依賴者), Tasan took grasp of Ricci’s intention to lower the philosophical significance of li that had been the most important concept in Neo-Confucianism. As the li is the attribute, it cannot exist per se and its existence depends on the substance.⁴⁶⁾

45) Aristotle’s doctrine of the four causes and Aquinas’ proofs for God’s existence had been known through Ricci’s *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* and introduced in Chǒng Yak-chong[丁若鍾]’s *Chugyoyoji*(主教要旨: *The Essentials of the Lord’s Teaching*) and Chǒng Ha-sang(丁夏祥)’s *Sangjaesangsǒ*(上宰相書: *A Letter of Petition to the Prime Minister*).

46) “若太極者，止解之以所謂理，則不能爲天地萬物之原矣。蓋理亦依賴之類，自不能立，何立他物哉?”(When we come to the Supreme Ultimate, we find that it is only explained in terms of principle. It cannot therefore be the source of heaven, earth, and all things because principle also falls into the category of accidents. Since it is not substance how

Moreover, li does not have the ability to create things because it is devoid of the intellect(靈), awareness(覺) and free will. The taiji(太極) also became the target of Ricci's criticism because Neo-Confucian philosopher like Zhu Xi(朱熹) insisted that the taiji should be none other than li. Ricci also criticized the attitude to put the taiji at the place of the progenitor of the all things.

Although I arrived in China late in life, I have assiduously studied the ancient records of China and discovered that the superior men of ancient times worshipped and revered the Sovereign on High, [the Supreme Lord] of Heaven and earth, but I have never heard of them paying respect to the Supreme Ultimate. If the Supreme Ultimate is the Sovereign on High and ancestor of all things, why did not the sages of ancient times say so? ⁴⁷⁾

The only reference to taiji in the ancient Chinese Confucian Classics is found in the “*Commentary on the Appended Phrases*” (繫辭傳) of the *Changes* : “In *Change*, there is the Supreme Pole(易有太極).”⁴⁸⁾ Because the taiji was a term referring to the divination

can it establish other things?) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.110~111.

47) “余雖末年入中華，然竊視古經書不怠，但聞古先君子敬恭於天地之上帝，未聞有尊奉太極者，如太極為上帝萬物之祖，古聖何隱其說乎？” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.106~107.

48) The taiji(太極, k,t'aegŭk) is the word rarely used in the pre-Qin(秦) literature. It is not

method with yarrow stalks, it was not explained in relation to the cosmogony from the beginning. The taiji has come to be considered the source of the everything in the universe since Zhou Dunyi(周敦頤) in Song dynasty posited the taiji as a single source that generated the yin-yang forces and the five elements in the *Explanations of the Taiji Diagram*(太極圖說). However, from Ricci's point of view, it would jeopardize God's position to accept such argument. It was for this reason that Ricci criticized the concept of taiji, saying, "The taiji is the empty symbol that is not based on any real principle."⁴⁹⁾ Tasan also expressed his disapproval of the taiji as the supreme being. In the *Self-written Epitaph*(自撰墓誌銘), Tasan mentioned about the futility of paying respect to taiji.

If you have fear, vigilance, and prudence, and serve the Shangdi brightly, you will be able to realize the "humaneness(仁, ren). However, if you pay respect to taiji(太極) in vain and regard the li(理) as heaven, you will not be able to realize the humaneness. Ultimately, we must return to serving the Heaven.⁵⁰⁾

found in the Laozi but is mentioned in the Tianyun(天運: Movements of heaven) of the Zhuangzi that Dao gives birth to heaven and earth, and is higher than the taiji and comes before heaven and earth(道 …… 生天地 在太極之上 …… 先天地生).

49) "況虛象無實, 理之可依耶?" Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.108~109.

50) "恐懼戒愼. 昭事上帝則可以爲仁. 虛尊太極. 以理爲天則不可以爲仁. 歸事天而已." *Self-written Epitaph*, *Chǒngbon Yǒyudangchǒnsǒ*, Vol.3, p.277.

Therefore, it is not the taiji but Shangdi that we should pay respect. Tasan and Ricci hold the same view that there should be a more fundamental existence than taiji. However, there is a considerable difference in their views on the taiji. Ricci regarded the taiji as the unreal image(虛象) because it was thought to belong to a category of number.⁵¹⁾ In the divination method(揲蓍法), the odd number(奇數) expresses the yang, whereas the even number(偶數) represents the yin. According to Ricci, the number cannot exist independently, but abides in the specific particular objects because the number is classified as the attribute. The number also belongs to the “suoyiran(所以然)” which means literally “that by which something is so.”⁵²⁾ Ricci noted that the taiji had been expressed by the shape of yin-yang(陽陰) in Zhou Dunyi(周敦頤)’s *Explanations of the Taiji Diagram*(太極圖說).⁵³⁾ Therefore, he maintained that not only the yin-yang but also the taiji should fall under the category of number. The taiji does not get involved in the movement of the qi(氣), because it is merely the unreal image. The Neo-Confucian

51) “況虛象無實，理之可依耶？” Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.108~109.

52) “The reasons for things being as they are include those inherent in things, such as the principles of Yin and Yang.”(所以然者，有在物之內分，如陰陽是也。) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.222~223.

53) “The theory, from what I have seen of the diagram illustrating the Ultimateless and the Supreme Ultimate, is based on symbols representing Yang and Yin; and what is [the reality of which] these symbols [are an expression]? It is obvious, then, that the Supreme Ultimate cannot be the reality which produced heaven and earth.”(吾視夫無極而太極之圖，不過取奇偶之象言，而其象何在？太極非生天之實，可知已。) Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.106~107.

philosophers saw the qi as the underlying energy which enabled the objects to move alive, but for Ricci, it was nothing more than the air that we breathe in and out. Tasan was of the same opinion with Ricci that the taiji should not be respected as the ultimate being of the universe. However, unlike Ricci who regarded the taiji as an imaginary image(虛象), Tasan thought that the taiji cannot be an unreal thing because the primordial energy, i.e., the yuanqi(元氣) that constitutes the initial state of the taiji evolves into the heaven and earth by making an autonomous movement by force of “the primordial qi”(yuanqi, 元氣).

Etymologically speaking, the ‘ji(極)’ of taiji(太極) means the ridgepole or the center beam that serves as the axis in an architectural structure. In the structure of a house, the rafters are attached to the ridgepole which stands at the highest point on the centre of a roof just like all the other stars circle around the north pole star in the sky.⁵⁴⁾ According to Tasan, the evolution of the universe takes place by the expansion and contraction of the taiji. The primal energy of the yuanqi(元氣) that constitutes the taiji moves and evolves by itself. In *Excerpts from Lu De-ming(陸德明)’s Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons(經典釋文)*, Tasan explained the creation of heaven and earth by using the metaphor of the growth of watermelon.

54) “Confucius said, ‘If the country is governed with morals, people will obey the monarch like stars go round the North Star.’”(子曰，爲政以德，譬如北辰居其所，而衆星共之。) *Weizheng chapter(爲政篇)* of the *Analects(論語)*.

Although the law of the creation of the universe and living creatures seems to be extraordinarily immense, it actually depends on the same method. When a watermelon starts to grow at the first stage, it is as small as a millet. When you see the growing process from its body, it starts to unfold a little bit from its stalk end, then forms the round shape, and again shrinks back and becomes the navel on the other side of the stalk end. It starts to be filled inside and gets bigger and bigger until it finally becomes a big watermelon. It should have been exactly the same, when the heaven and earth had been created for the first time. The north pole star is, so to speak, the stalk end of a watermelon and when it develops into the round shape and shrinks into the south pole that matches with the navel of the watermelon. It is no different than the plants that bear the fruits and produce grain. When the universe first appeared, it would have been created in the same way.⁵⁵⁾

Tasan's theory of the universe can be thought as a type of

55) “造物生物之法，雖若廣大，其實皆用一例。西瓜之始生也，其小如粟，而就其體中，求其所以漸大之故，則先自蒂始，小舒爲圓形，復收爲花臍【花附之所落】乃實乃脰，以成大瓜。天地創造之初，其法亦必如此。北辰者，瓜之蒂也。漸舒爲圓形，復收爲南極，南極者，瓜之臍也。草木瓜蓏百果百穀，其例皆同。則洪造之初，其法應然。” *Excerpts from Lu De-ming's Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons, Introductory Remarks on the Study of Changes, Chǒngbon Yǒyudangchǒnsǒ*, Vol.17, pp.260~261.

expansion theory that the universe expands over time. Tasan assumed that the universe should have been the size of a tiny millet at the very beginning of the expansion.⁵⁶⁾ The seed of a watermelon is as small as a millet at the beginning but it gradually grows into a large, round-shaped watermelon. The universe makes its own shape by repeating the expansion and the contraction. Tasan presented the space model as a round ball by describing the universe as a form of watermelon model. Tasan's idea of the self-evolving universe is much closer to the evolution model presented by modern physics. Ricci, on the other hand, did not accept the evolutionary view because he believed the Biblical explanation that the universe had been created in six days by God. Ricci did not think that the evolution was necessary because the universe should have been made complete from the beginning by God.

56) Sŏng T'ae-yong translated the phrase as follows.: "When a watermelon starts to grow at the first stage, it is as small as a chestnut." (西瓜之始生也, 其小如栗.) Sŏng T'ae-yong, "The Heavenly God without revelation in Tasan's philosophy", *The Journal of Tasan Studies*, Vol.5, 2004, p.108. And Paek Min-jŏng followed it in his book, *Philosophy of Chŏng Yagyong* (Ihaksa, 2007, p.178). But Sung and Paek seems to have misread the sok (粟, millet) as yul (栗, chestnut) because the two letters are quite similar in shape. The millet and chestnut differ considerably in their size. The size of a watermelon seed is approximately about 1 cm, whereas the chestnut is about 2-3 cm in diameter. Roughly speaking, the size of the chestnut is about two or three times larger than the watermelon seed. Accordingly, the phrase must be translated as follows.: "When a watermelon starts to grow at the first stage, it is as small as a millet." (西瓜之始生也, 其小如粟.)

5. Conclusion

In this article, I argued that Tasan tried to reconcile the creationism with the view of evolution. His explanation on the evolution of the universe is principally based on the taiji chapter of the *“Commentary on the Appended Phrases”* (*Xicizhuan*: 繫辭傳) but also shows the influence of Ricci’s *Tianzhushiyi* (*True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*). Tasan defined Shangdi as a deity of zaohua(造化), zaizhi(宰制), and anyang(安養) in the *Evidential Analysis of the Spring and Autumn Annals*(春秋考徵). Most researchers argued that Tasan used the word of zaohua(造化) to express the inexplicable mystery of natural phenomena(自然造化). Accordingly, it does not suggest that there should be Creator of the natural world. Ryu Ch’o-ha(柳初夏), on the other hand, argued that Tasan used the word in the context of creationism. He went even further to say that the Shangdi(上帝) created the taiji. I agree to Yu’s opinion that the zaohua(造化) should be interpreted in the context of creationism. In *Excerpts from Lu De-ming’s* (陸德明)’s *Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons*(經典釋文) Tasan mentioned about the beginning of the creation of Heaven and Earth(天地創造之初) and the principle of great creation(洪造之理). If Tasan did not hold the view of creationism, it was not necessary for him to use these words. Furthermore, he compared the creation of the world to the process in which the potter fashioned the pottery from the clay. This reminds us of Ricci’s analogy of tianzhu(天主: Lord of

Heaven) as a Divine Artisan. Furthermore, Tasan's mention of "the beginning of the creation of Heaven and Earth(天地創造之初)" clearly shows that he was influenced by Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*. But Tasan's notion of the earthenware craftsman(埴埴之家) was more like a Demiourgos in Plato's *Timaeus* than the God in the Bible. In the *Timaeus*, Plato describes Demiourgos as the divine craftsman who takes preexisting materials and arranges them in accordance with the models of eternal forms. Therefore, Demiourgos does not create the world from nothing but fashions and shapes the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas. However, some parts of Tasan's opinion are clearly different from Ricci's. In the *Excerpts from Lu Deming's Explanative Writings to the Classical Canons*(經典釋文), Tasan explained the creation of Heaven and Earth by using the metaphor of the growth of watermelon. This shows the evolutionist view as well as the creationism. Tasan's notion of yuanqi(元氣) also differs from Ricci in that it moves by itself and forms the Heaven and Earth.

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Abstract

Chǒng Yag-yong's cosmogonic idea and Matteo Ricci's influence shown in his interpretation of the *Zhouyi*

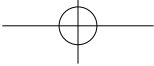
— A compromise between creationism and evolutionism

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It is widely acknowledged that Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*(天主實義, *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) had a profound influence on the formation of Tasan Chǒng Yag-yong's cosmogony. However, some doubts remain as to whether Tasan accepted the Biblical creationism which was one of the most important doctrines in the *Tianzhushiyi*. Most of the scholars believed that the term of 'zaohua(造化)' in Tasan's *Ch'unch'ugojing*(春秋考微) did not imply a meaning of creation. On the other hand, Ryu Ch'o-ha(柳初夏) argued that the 'zaohua' implied the meaning of creation. In addition, he insisted that the Shangdi(上帝) had created the taiji(太極, Great Pole). Tasan's mention of "the beginning of the creation of Heaven and Earth(天地創造之初)" clearly shows the influence of Ricci's *Tianzhushiyi*. Jesuit missionaries tried to avoid using the term of

‘zaohua(造化)’ as much as possible because they recognized that the term could conflict with the concept of creation. Instead, they frequently used the term of zhizuo(制作: production or making). With this regard, it seems that the concept of ‘artisan God’ which is presented as demiurge(demiourgos) in Plato’s *Timaeus* had influenced Ricci’s point of view. In *Yuk Tǒng-myǒng Sǒngmunch’o*(陸德明釋文鈔), Tasan suggested that taiji as small as the size of the watermelon seed grew into the Heaven and Earth. This can be seen as a kind of evolutionary point of view. At the same time, Tasan compared the creation of Heaven and Earth to the work of the earthenware craftsman(埴埴之家) who made the pottery out of the clay. This reminds us of Ricci’s analogy of tianzhu(天主: Lord of Heaven) as a Divine Artisan, namely, artisan God. This is more like Demiourgos’ making of the world rather than the creation from nothing. The Demiourgos does not create the raw material but merely gives order and form to a given material. Tasan did not think the creation as a single event but as a whole process of producing heaven and earth from the taiji. This can be considered as a kind of a progressive creationism. From Tasan’s point of view, the evolutionary theory and progressive creationism are not necessarily contradictory. Although Shangdi did not create the raw material of taiji, he completes the creation by getting involved in the process of making the Heaven and



Earth(兩儀) from the taiji(太極).

Key Words | Chǒng Yag-yong, Matteo Ricci, *Tianzhushiyi*(天主實義),
zaohua(造化).

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