**An Integrational Ontology Toward the Organic Ecology**

**A. Background: Ecological Difference between Ham Seokheon and Some Ecologist**

It was cold last winter. But it was burdensome to say that it was cold, perhaps because it was reported that polar bears found it hard to get foods for their cubs since glacier has been melting due to global warming and it can be imagined that there is no reason for believing that human beings can avoid a similar fate. The idea that proper environment is essential for the maintenance of all kinds of lives has been appreciated more than in any other epochs of human history and the values of life and environment have dictated human interests, researches and discussions more and more. In this context, Sukheon Ham’s seeds thought can offer a glimpse of a way to the discussions.

For a while, life and environment have been regarded as two separate subjects. Life has been an important theme even when there was not much interest in environment. It was perhaps because life was taken to be necessary to maintain consciousness or agency in living bodies. This notion of agency is decisive not only in the body’s activities but also the body’s relation with other bodies. Life is a determinant in the way things in the world are related to each other. Because life plays among things in the world, life and environment cannot afford to remain separate. The tradition that agency has been allowed to human beings only to enjoy as a person is now in the process of change. Any attempt to widen the scope of agency from humans to animals, plants, and inanimates will be influenced by a decision of where to place the line between continuity and discontinuity and also guide direction how ecology will be developed. Any ecology which will accept ‘the expanded ladder of agency’ may be regarded as a form of organisme. Life and environment are now different aspects of one single theme. But the scope of the ladder of agency will differentiate degrees of organism. Sukheon Ham pushes down the ladder of agency to the lowest possible stage.

Singer expands the ladder of agency to the level of animals (Singer 2001: 35). For tribalism cannot be admitted in the same logic as racism should be rejected. But he stopped there. He believes that though the full agency of animal life cannot be regarded to be impossible it must be suspicious. Singer includes organisms only which have the capacities of pain and pleasure as agents of moral values. But this idea is troublesome since it is persuasive only with presupposition that moral act derives from Cartesian dualistic conception of consciousness or sentient judgement.

Jiha Kim’s discussion (Jiha Kim 1996: 55) of ‘tend(侍)’ is worthy of mention in the sense that it ignores dualistic constraints. He interprets Haewol’s tend by saying that anything in the world realizes its own embedded objective in the context of cosmic fluxes so far as it has spirits inside and evaporation outside. He renounces any point of views which claim that matter, life, reason, divinity, existence and nothingness are terms of solitary entities or terms of opposition. His understanding of life is in accord with Schweitzer’s spiritual view that life is holy as itself and as object of reverence.

Views of life found in Zhang Hwe-Ik and Naess are more philosophical. Zhang believes that it would be natural to include in ‘me’ ‘the global life(Onsaengmyung)’ which is the most inclusive possible system of life in order for me or any living bodies to maintain myself or themselves (Zhang 1998: 167-197). Naess offers ‘Deep Ecology’ that all living bodies are worthy of themselves independently of whether they are useful for others and that I am more than my body or my consciousness in order to be Self in the capital S which is inclusive of all. (Naess 1989)[[1]](#footnote-1)

Taylor goes one step beyond limiting life to living bodies (Taylor 1993: 74). He says that all beings, conscious or not conscious, are a center of equal teleological life, in the sense that they are each a system of intentional activities toward its preservation and flourishing. But there is a problem to him. He does not present a detailed explanation as to how an unconscious thing can be a center of such a thriving life. A similar form of this question can be raised to other life environmentalists. Even in the case of limiting life to living organisms, Naess does not offer a precise description about how ants or oysters are such a sophisticated agent.

But Seokheon Ham looks to be different. Seeds, in his use of the term, are a spirit laden in things, an infinite hidden in the finites, an eternity as an emergent of from the temporals (Ham 1993: 14/323-357). He proposes that animates and inanimates are one because of the fact that they all are a performer of its own life seed and that these seeds are agents of life and historical sense which can be drawn as unity with history through participation in its suffering. The present article is an attempt to sketch an integrational ontology which Ham’s Seeds thought stimulate toward the organic ecology.

**B. Integration: Sukheon Ham’s Ecological World View**

There are many concepts which are central to Ham’s seeds thoughts. One of them may be the notion of integration. He writes:

“There are powers which undergoes anything in time or space and which penetrates into it to make it to remain as one. There are senses or forces which sustain lives of spirits or matters. They are called belief, faith or conviction in the case of human beings. These may be subsumed under the English word ‘integration‘, or understood as a principle of unification. Belief is one integrational power” (Ham 1993: 1-375).

He submits a doctrine about power and sense as the fundamental of all including space, time, matter and spirit. The doctrine aims at the principle which abides in all and which unites all, calling the principle ‘integration’.

Integration is a property which is unifying various elements. If an act of unification is an act which a human performs with a concept or a language, integration would remain a character of a collection of sentences which unifies all or a character of consistency of propositions the system of which unifies all. If one understands integration according to its etymological connection, there is nothing new in Ham’s seeds thoughts. Ham needs to be approached more in terms of a deep integration rather than a shallow one.

Ham’s deep integration has a clue in his statement “there is not a thing in the world which does not have a reason to exist” (Ham 1933: 9-45). This reminds of Hanki Choe’s proposition that there is nothing in the universe that is beyond reason(無物外理). They point to the fact that all things are linked to each other by reasons, small or grand. Then contradictions or inconsistencies are merely a linguistic phenomenon which can be resulted in descriptions of things or states of affairs which do not fit to each other. Ham asks a question by saying “why don’t we call life ‘an unification of contradictions’?” (Ham 1933: 9-45). Whereas the Western tradition has sought a consistent world view by introducing all things under various concepts and arranging them under the rational system, the East Asian tradition has tried each person to discipline and to refine oneself in order to reach a character fitting the cosmos. Ham chose the latter model, disciplined himself in participation in historical processes and attempted an integration of himself with all others.

I assume that Ham offered a model of deep integration and try to defend a proposition that the assumption is exhibited in the equivalent linkage of life and sense. A pointer for such an equivalent linkage is found in an expression “some force or certain sense undergoes life of all including matter and spirit”[[2]](#footnote-2). The equivalent linkage appears throughout the stages of his seeds thought. The section B is a discussion of this linkage. I will pay a close attention to the hypothesis of the linkage through Ham’s metaphysics of ‘one’, ‘seeds’, ‘suffering’.

**(B1) Oneness: integration of animates and inanimates**

Most life-environmentalists see life-environmental autotelic values in the continuity of humans and other living bodies. But Ham goes one step beyond the continuity to say that humans and others are integrationally one. His claim is explained more in concrete terms. He offered integration of humans and others according to the stages of levels: my mind and my body, I and other persons, humans and other things.

Ham supports his thesis that my mind and my body are one by arguing from the notion of personhood. “There is a relation which is not separable of mind and body. Personhood is what mind and body becomes one into. Therefore any one is expected to discipline oneself” (Ham 1933: 2-313). Personhood could not be constructed out of mind of dualism nor of body. Dualistic body is a mere machine[[3]](#footnote-3), dualistic mind, though it is a substance, does not satisfy conditions that current society demands a moral agent to entertain, one among others being a condition of inter-subjective communication. Ham’s notion of integrational personhood of body and mind is much plausible.

Ham is also clear as to the integration of me and other humans: “Seeing oneself in other humans, or faith in the generation to come and not in oneself is an attitude which will save oneself. I do not exist in myself but in the mankind to come, or to have come in the past” (Ham 1933: 9-318). There are arguments possible for this. One of them would be an argument from the notion of language community. My experiences of the world depend on the way I use languages but languages have been molded by humans of the past and my experiences of the world will be evaluated by future humans to come. My experiences or my existence are not independent from such human solidarities.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The last case of integration is that between humans and all other things: “Seeds are the whole as well as parts of it. It is said that God is in me and I am in God. But simply put, the big egg is in small eggs and a small egg is in the big egg. No! there is neither big nor small. There are merely eggs. Speaking for eggs, out exists in, in exists out. Out of out is in, in of in is out. The result of drawing out is O, the consequence of drawing in is • ” (Ham 1933: 14-341). The quotation above requires a deep reflection. Part seeds are an individual but the whole seed is the holistic universe. For if God is in me and I am in God, then God and I are one. Thus there are only eggs.

Consequently, what remains to be are livings or lives. There is no distinction. “There is neither matter nor mind but a life or one” (Ham 2003: 434). “This and that are not different. This exists in that, being a flower of this, that is the root of this. This and that constitutes a life which forms one. Cosmos is life itself (Ham 1933: 9/33). Ham’s metaphors of this sort will be made clear in the following discussions on integration of sense and life.

**B2. Seeds: integration of sense and life**

Ham’s seeds in a certain context are taken to be people. The locution is used with the meaning as its primary connotation. And other elements are getting in the conception of seeds. Factors of life and sense make the conception of seeds to be richer. One may go beyond this formal consideration in order to investigate a possibility of how to interpret seeds integrationally by using the equivalent linkage between seeds and senses.

Integrational structure of seeds may be expressed by Ham’s proposition that seeds embody senses[[5]](#footnote-5). “Seeds” is not merely a locution to denote the extension of seeds but to designate agents which execute agency of embodiment of sense and its performance. Seeds are equipped equivalently with manifestations of sense and life. Since Ham could neither think of seeds without sense and nor imagine of seeds without life, seeds come to have values equivalent to values of life. For there is no existence without reason and no reason without existence[[6]](#footnote-6).

Seeds as integrators of sense are bound to suffer in the vicious circle of the actual world. The suffering is a property which is inescapable to the integrator of sense. Rather seeds come to extend the life and to expand it through sharing of suffering. The lucidity of life in seeds is “possible by self-sacrifice and by giving up oneself” (Ham 1933: 9/45~47). Since seeds have self-sacrifice as their essences, lives of seeds are conducted as a foolishly deceived life, unhappy heart in endurance (Ham 1933: 8/80), and breathes full of suffering (Ham 2003: 15, 94).

Seeds which are apprehended in the context of history is people of suffering or minjung (民衆). Seeds also can be understood in the context of nature. Seeds as equivalent integrators of sense and life can be grasped from all the individuals in the nature. When Ham said “Seeds exchange to each other, cry together and feel in sync, they are greater than the sum of parts, since parts exist in the whole and the whole exists in parts” (Ham 1933: 14/ 332~336), this applies primarily to people but can be employed to all the individuals in the nature. Ham’s notion that people’s mind is the heavenly mind(人心天心) is to be anointed to humans but it requires an expansion when it confronts another proposition that human and heaven are to be one(天人合一). Humans are not the only integrators of sense and life, history is not the only space where integrations are taking place, but the whole cosmos is the integrator full of life, maintaining all the integrators in it[[7]](#footnote-7).

**B3. Suffering: historical integration**

Ham’s view of history is shown characteristically in connection with the perspective of his world view interweaved with the notions of seeds and oneness. His history comes to have a personhood by equivalence of sense and life which is realized through integration of animates and inanimates including human history as well as natural history. There is still the third element in his history to be emphasized. It is the theme of suffering.

Ham’s suffering is a core concept which encapsulates the history of integration which undergoes human history and natural history. But his notion of suffering is troublesome despite of its apparent clarity. For his world view is interweaved with other elements. One of them is the notion of suffering, which I still consider to be one of key concepts to illuminate the idea of history as a case of integration. For his notion of suffering offers a persuasive perspective as for how to see the metaphysics of seeds and oneness.

Ham’s metaphysics of seeds and oneness is an ontology of identity, but as the idea of suffering is introduced his metaphysics becomes dynamic in virtue of life. Ham accepts theories of natural evolutions and historical developments at the same time. “Since suffering is an eternal fertilization of the spirit, people is to be fertilized with the spirit to enjoy an authentic history of the future (Ham 1933: 4/76). As suffering is a way of cleansing sins (Ham 2003: 463), hardship is not the job for the weak, but for the strong (Ham 2003: 482). ”The fact that I suffer is neither because I have sinned nor because I needed discipline but because it was required for all and with joy“(Ham 1993: 11/157). A reason why Korean history is history of suffering is that Korean history is to be a bearer of a burden of the world and to compensate an injustice of the world” (Ham 2003: 478). The world is to appreciate a grammar that Korea plays a role of drain for the suffering of the world (Ham 2003: 479). Seeing that life is realized in the process of historical developments through suffering, one is to confess “there is no such things called ‘I’ and ‘not-I’, but only oneness” (Ham 1933: 8/60; 2/68, 216).

There are needs for scholars to investigate various aspects of suffering which Ham wanted to size up for many years. What is suffering? What kind of experience is the suffering which is said to function such important roles? Here is one possible interpretation to answer to the question. Suffering is a pain but can’t be replaced with a pain. Pain is primarily physical but suffering is primarily mental. The conditions on which two concepts can be constructed are different and such contrast can be pursued further. Pain which other can cause to take place is at the level of an individual. But other may not be necessarily involved in the experience of pain.

But suffering is different. In one’s experience of suffering other is necessarily tangled in the experience as an element. Let’s see the following example.

(1) A school senior Kim is blown on the face by a school junior Lee because of anger caused by Kim’s negative comments on Lee.

Kim’s pain from face slapping was caused by Lee. But his physical experience of pain does not necessarily require Lee’s personhood or such involved propositional content. Kim might have the same kind of physical pain when his face was slapped accidently by neighboring passenger’s arm movement in a subway. But Kim’s suffering of the face punch is different. Kim’s suffering is not separable from Lee’s personhood. Kim’s suffering is an experience of some sort where Kim integrates his valuations of Lee’s performances of schooling, of extra curricula activities, of individual personhood and where Kim personified the valuations by propositionalizing them. Kim’s suffering is essential to the event where Kim was blown, which is absent in the event where Kim was slapped in a subway. There is no element of propositional content in a physical pain but they are in the case of mental suffering.

Ham’s suffering has a larger horizon than Kim’s suffering. Ham’s suffering is integrational of more elements than those in Kim’s case. Ham’s notion of suffering requires more for an explanation. One basic idea may be introduced[[8]](#footnote-8). It is that humans can be moral due to grace of other people. The idea is against Kantian tradition that I can be moral only if I should decide my will irrespective of extraneous elements other than ethical norms. But my will is often nullified under the threads of authoritarian, dictator, paternalism, vagabond, robber. I can be moral only if neighbors do not rob me of my chance to be moral. I can be moral only if I can be me and my chance to be moral is not taken away.

Then, my experience of suffering takes place when a moment where I can be me is robbed away by somebody else. These robbers are not limited to the class of dictators or the likes. Any neighbor can do it consciously or unconsciously. The conditions in which I can be not moral or I can not be me are ubiquitous. When I fall in this dehumanization I become a ‘drain’ of this dehumanization and I bear the burden of the dehumanization. I carry the troubles of sins. The volume and quality of my suffering are decided in accordance with the degrees of dehumanization. Paradoxically, the opponent’s dehumanity which negates my humanity is ‘saved’ by the means of my suffering. My suffering allows the opponent’s temporal reservation to be oneself. The opponent gets saved through my suffering.

Ham does not restrict the notion of suffering to the human history. He grants the capacity of suffering to histories of all kinds of entities which is an actual seed or a possible one. For not only humans but also all other living bodies cannot maintain life without some sort of sufferings. Ham goes further to say that entities of sorts of animates as well as inanimates maintain self-preservation and evolution, undergoing processes of sufferings of some kinds. The life of seeds is a property which is realizable “only through self-sacrifice and self-giving up” (Ham 1933: 9/45-47). Since self-sacrifice is an essential property of seeds, lives of seeds is being deceived foolishly, enduring unhappiness (Ham 1933: 8/80), and cutting side branches with all might (Ham 1933: 2/299).

Ham’s idea of historical suffering illuminates Ham’s metaphysics of oneness. Ham believes that history is not a record of facts but a sense that facts convey, asserts that all human beings are ‘all one life’ and do not exist independently from each other, and offers a metaphysical vision that ‘history is one’(Ham 2003: 41). “History grows in order to realize the one sense” (Ham 1933: 9/14). “History is one since historical records are realizing of the sense”. One best way to understand Ham’s statements of this sort is to appeal to his notion of suffering. Humans, living bodies and inanimates all endure sufferings, bearing burdens from other’s loads. In the structure of sufferings for the sake of others, all are interweaved together in the solidarity of oneness (Ham 2003: 37, 41).

Ham’s suffering also explains his metaphysics of seeds. It will help to understand his statement “seeds realize the sense”. If suffering is an ultimate predicament of cosmic history, then suffering is the will of the heaven and seeds are agents who conduct their lives in accord with such an ultimate goal. All entities go through suffering but seeds are exclusive realizers of the sense because of their conceptual characterizations.

**C. The notion of integration(誠): links of the integrational world view**

Ham’s notion of integration needs to be explicated ontologically. For Ham’s mentions on integration is often made only poetically or metaphorically. This may be one reason for the fact that his thought is powerful and yet hard to refute, which presents a difficulty for a sustained discussion. His thoughts are intuitive and hard to grasp conceptually. For an example, how could we take Ham’s utterance “a power or certain sense, which undergoes the life of things, spiritual or material” to mean? What kind of ontology would allow Ham’s equivocation of sense and life to be plausible? Could one accept Ham’s utterance as it is and ignore other’s curiosity or negligence? If one can reach a reasonable account of it, would it not be worthwhile?

I would like to examine the concept of integration in order to propose that the concept of integration of *Zhungyong* (Zisi 1991) can be could be a linkage to connect with Ham’s integrational view of the world. The Chinese word 'cheng 誠' has the following things as its ordinary meanings: sincerity, devotion, concentration of mind, seriousness, truthful, honesty, integrity, rigidity, moderate, relevance, manners, balance, composure, objectivity, admiration. The diversity of meanings of the word may be implicit in the etymology of the word. The word is the compound of ‘un 言’ (language) and ‘sung 成’ (realization), the first of which reflects language, meaning, principle, logic, essence, and objective, and the second of which implies realization, accomplishment, completion and arrival.

The conception of cheng has been constructed in East Asia tradition through the influence of *Zhungyong*. Though some scholars offered more emphasis on the moral dimension while interpreting the word[[9]](#footnote-9), I would claim that the etymological implication of the word is more coherent with the major thrust of *Zhungyong*. Three sentences from the book are worthy of noting.

Cheng is the heavenly dao and willing to cheng is the human dao (chapter 20).

Cheng is realization of oneself, dao is leading oneself; cheng is the power to maintain oneself from

the beginning to the end. Without cheng there is not a thing (chapter 25).

Therefore, there is no pause for an utmost cheng. This is shining without manifestation, changing

without movement, realizing without manipulation. (chapter 26)

I take these propositions to imply the notion of integration[[10]](#footnote-10). Thus understood, the notion of integration may be clarified further as what follows.

(C1) Cheng of a thing is the capacity to realize its embedded objective in its interactions with all

other things.

What would be the structure of integration? There seems to be two options. The first is an approach from the third person perspective. It is an act of synthesis or of harmony of two elements or more consistently. The second is an interpretation from the first person point of view. It is my own transformation[[11]](#footnote-11) where elements in other’s system are introduced in my own for adjustment and elements of my systems allowed to be absorbed in other’s system for a modification. The third person approach is not satisfactory in assuming some sort of absolutistic order. But the first person approach is preferable in that it is pluralistic, interactive, and discursive. Then there is a route where all things in the world may be called ‘integrators’ in that each of them all exchanges informations with all others and integrators are ubiquitous. Cartesian tradition gave integrators a name of ‘mind’ and limited the capacity of mind only to humans. But Zisi proposed in Zhungyong that any thing in the world is an integrator and that it has the capacity of mind for the integration. This is another element of the notion of cheng which can be stated as follows.

(C2) ‘mind’ denotes the capacity of humans as well as the capacity of all other entities.

The difference between Descartes and Zisi is clear. Descartes made the distinction between mind and matter rationally, logically. It can be conceived that humans, can exist without bodies but not without thinking. Body is accidental to humans but thinking is essential to humans. The same logic is applied to other existents and the conclusion is reached by saying that humans are thinking being and other beings do not think being a machine. Cartesian dualism is resulted.

But there is a flaw in Cartesian modal consideration. It is assumed that embodied humans think in the actual world and disembodied humans think in a possible world. A question is about humans in the possible world: how can disembodied humans be identified in the possible world? Memory is not a good criterion for the identification. Zisi maintain the thesis of continuity between humans and other things due to his notion of integration.

(C3) Integration is a capacity not only of humans but also of all other entities.

The continuity thesis can be supported. If the theory of evolution explains the origin of species, the continuity thesis should be a thesis of the theory. The theory should include not only the evolution of human bodies but also the evolution of human minds. The history of humans is to be continuous with the history of all other things.

(C4) If the evolution demonstrates the history of species as the fittest, then the history expresses

the evolution of life forms of intelligence and justice.

The evolutionary theory seems to be optimistic. For it is a presumption which is constructed from the perspective of a survival. Of course, there were conflicts and sufferings in the course of evolution. But the holistic result of the evolutionary process reflects that survivals are more organically interconnected. If one chooses to see the nature from this perspective it may be alleged that nature is a resulting harmony. The conception of cheng is an indication of such an internal optimism.

(C5) Integration of an entity is a disposition to realize its embedded objective in the context of its

interconnections with all others at a particular time and place.

The idea of cheng integration does not exclude elements of conflicts. The value of integration, if required, demands sharp complaints or grand earthquakes. The final harmony or peace will be reached through such a process.

Let’s examine about the difference between readings of the 3rd person the 1st person. Dualism cannot accept the authentic thesis of integration. If a dualism is receptive to the integration thesis it may indicate certain aspect of the 3rd person integration. It would be a partial integration. It would not be the integration of mind and body, but an integration of certain elements in one’s mental states or an integration of certain parts in physical worlds. A partial integration is not unacceptable but not authentic in that it is merely of a 3rd person description. Certain scholars persuaded by integration perspective favors such a partial integration. (Kim, Heup-Young 2009: 99-101; Kim, Younghwan 2005: 3-22)

I believe that most organic ontologies accommodate the integration thesis. An organic ontology may not use the word ‘integration’ but is often linked with the structure of the idea of integration. But its integration is perspectival of the 3rd person. This is perhaps because the organic ontology may have presupposed an absolutism of the monolithic ideology system.

Ham’s integrational world view is perspectival of the 1st person. He doesn’t seem to have discussed about the distinction between the monolithic system and pluralistic systems. But he appears to presuppose some sort of pluralism, being open to various systems which are in conflicts to each other. When he offered the notion of integration he suggested what would end up as a 1st person perspective. His notion of suffering requires a 1st person interpretation.

How could a vegetable or a rock be a 1st person interpreter? This question may be approached by clarifying the difference between asking the question in the context of dualism and in the context of integration. A vegetable or a rock under the dominance of dualism cannot be a subject of 1st person interpretation. But if a rock has a capacity of integration and is a subject of mind capacity, then the rock under the influence of integrational ontology should come in the state of processing information in accordance with the states of its environments. The rock will respond to light, temperature, humidity, wind, air pressure in order to process information to maintain itself. The rock in such a process interacts with others in the environment, exemplifying a discourse among different systems of plural languages.[[12]](#footnote-12)

(D) Ontology of Integration: Concluding Remarks

Isn’t the integrational ontology above too abstract? Where does its persuasiveness come from? The integrational ontology is abstract in that it is metaphysical. There is a way to make it to be concrete. A possibility is seen when Han Myun-Hee (1997) offered an expansive ecological ethics of organisms and inanimates (Han, Myun-Hee 1997; 2009). His language of Global (Onn) value and chi can be translated in terms of the notion of integration. The Global value is a value which “nature of the earth has from the past to the present” and chi is thought to be an East Asian tradition that “Dao begets chi, chi bears yinyang and yinyang bring forth yin chi, yang chi and harmony chi; the three generates all things”. The metaphysics of integrational ontology can be demonstrated in chi centered environmental ethics or an approach like it.

The ontology of integration may be shown to be credible in other ways. It may be an alternative to traditional physicalism. Physicalism has claimed that all things can be physically reduced or explained. Physicalism has added many insights to advance the claim, thereby making contributions to philosophical languages. But it seems to be generally conceded that it would be hard to reduce or to explain consciousness or mental content in physical tgerms.[[13]](#footnote-13)

One problem of physicalism is its structure where the notion of mind is approached from the perspective of dualism of mind and matter. A general notion that matter is real and mind is not real was constructed from the view of realism dictated by the primacy of matter. But how could one deny the reality of mind? If one suffers a pain of mind and lies down on a hospital bed, could the reality of this mind be denied? If one accepts the evolution of human body but not the evolution of human mind, it should be one sided reading of the history of the human evolution.

The integrational ontology offers a perspective to understand the world differently. The hypothesis of equalization of sense and life in Ham’s thought is clearly confirmed in lives of humans but is also imbued in lives of animals, vegetables and even inanimates. If the evolution of human mind is manifested in this way, it should be possible that some sort of proto arch type of mind might be impregnated.

The integrational ontology is coherent with the informational view of the contemporary culture. If the information world view consists of statements like “information is a syntactical unit of states”, “all states are a text to be interpreted”, “whatever human eyes reach is a text”, Ham’s equalization thesis of sense and life is more meaningful with such a view. What kind of ontology in the past could be consistent with the informational view of the world this much?

The integrational ontology stresses the idea of suffering. So does Ham. But what has been the core value of other ontologies or philosophical anthropologies? The concept of suffering can be compared with the values like love, equality, freedom, justice. Of course, the notion of suffering does not solve all the problems human societies face. But the idea of suffering offer moving reasons why each of humans be near to others.[[14]](#footnote-14)

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1. The notion of Greater Self is found in Ham (Ham 1993: 11/84). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The notion of ‘sense’ is important in Ham’s thought. Ham’s ‘sense’ does neither denote a linguistic or a non-natural meaning of a word (as in the case that ‘Namsan’ in Korean language means the hill south of Gyungbok palace in Seoul), nor designate a natural meaning of a word (as in the case that Namsan is the hill in the center of Seoul surrounded by seven mountains), but point to a metaphysical meaning of a word (as in the case that Namsan is a representation of independence of Korean people who do not submit conquerors), or to an integrational meaning (as in the case that Namsan provides Seoul urbanites with active oxygen). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Basically there are two perspectives in understanding the world which includes all humans as its elements. One is meeting the world phenomenologically and the other is meeting it as the sense. . . Biologist’s explanation of the origin of life comes from the view of the world as a phenomenological dimension. But this is not all. Originally this world was the realm not of an accident but of the sense. . . As Longfellow said that what one sees is not a fact”. (Ham 1993: 9/42) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The notion of discourse should provide an argument for this statement. Four members of a family (eg., father, mother, son and daughter) each possess one’s own language space and yet they can share a space common to them. The bigger the language space they share is, the easier they can communicate to each other. The smaller the space is, the harder they can talk to each other. The interconnected language space is an evidence for the solidarity of members of a language (Chung 2008d). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ham (1979: 119-123) wrote the following: “Thinking seeds only live. Seeds are to think. When anything thinks it is a seed. If it does not think it is a chaff. The egg of a seed comes from the heaven, The heaven is a spirit. What came from the heaven and resides in us is an egg. Whatever does think is an egg and it think an egg. An egg must be in entities. An egg gets matured as thinking gets refined. An egg is a spirit which has come in a matter. It is an infinite which has come in a finite, is an eternity which resides in a time. When one gets in an egg it is alive. It will definitely live”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “It is not that biology does not talk about the property of life. It claims many things about molecular formula of

   Carbon and nitrogen, growths, caloric intake, generative function. But the claim is an irrelevant answer to the question to seek the sense of life. That kind of claim cannot satisfy questions about what a spirit demands. Why doesn’t it say that life is an endeavor to reach a freedom? . . . that life is some kind of harmonization of contradictions? . . . It does say nothing about the reason of life. It would be foolish to talk about the origin of life without thinking about the reason of life. The world of sense does guarantee that nothing exists without a reason, and the reason of an entity determines the form of its existence and opportunities. (Ham 1993: 9/44~45) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The basic insights of the present section are based on (Chung 2008c: 110). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Williams 1981; Zizeck 2003; Kohl 1984; Lee, Myungkyo 1990. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Jonghon Park (1980: 3/608-20: existence); Sangun Lee (1999: faithfulness); Legge(1971: sincerity). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Professor Gwangse Lee of Kent State University suggested the word “integration” as a translation of cheng (誠) of *Zhungyong* at a seminar on Chinese philosophy. The suggestion is in accordance with Ham’s idea of integration. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Andrew Fogarty says that what comes to his mind first is “changing” or “adaptation”, when he hears “integration". [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The most of the present section is constructed on the basis of Chung, Daihyun (2008a; 2008b; 2008c). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Professor Jaegwon Kim is one of the most influential philosophers of the tradition of physicalism, and discussions about his physicalism is an attempt to learn anew in the midst of difficulties thereof, Ha Jong-Ho,

    Chung Daihyun, Choi Hoon, Hong Chang-Seong, Kim Sunhie, Lee Jong-Wang, Lee Jwayong, Paik Tohyung, Sunwoo Hwan, Shin Sangkyu 2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The manuscript of the present paper was read at the assembly of foundation of ‘Society of Ham Seokheon Research’ (Theme: Why Ham Seokheon?, April 16, 2010) and was revised and expanded into the article. The present version is a translation of (Chung 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)