

Ethic of Compassion and Economy of Love: Rethinking Confucian Economics as an Alternative to Global Capitalism

Oxford Institute of the Methodist Theological Studies, 2007

J. C. Park, Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, Korea

Jesus, Multitude, and Empire

“After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him.” (John 6: 1-2a)

It is significant that all of the 6 reports of the miracle of the multiplication of the bread and the fish in the Gospels (Matt. 14: 13-21; Matt. 15: 29-39; Mark 6: 30-44; Mark 8: 1-10; Luke 9: 10-17; John 6: 1-15) focus on Jesus’ encounter with the multitude (the ochlos in Greek and the minjung in Korean). The report in the Gospel of John is unique in its geo-political mentioning of the site of the encounter: i.e., the Sea of Tiberias! At the time of Jesus the Sea of Galilee was called after the city of Tiberias that the Roman emperor built in 18 CE. Jesus moved about among the multitude of Galilee in the time of the ascendancy of the Roman Empire, announcing and enacting the coming of a radically new reality, the Kingdom of God.

Concerning the geopolitical significance of the birth of Christianity, Hardt and Negri spoke of the hope for the emergence of a multitude, a transformation of the old order by the power of the powerless: “In this process an enormous potential of subjectivity was constructed and consolidated....This new subjectivity offered an absolute alternative to the spirit of imperial right” (Hardt and Negri 2000:21). They saw in the Gospel a new emancipatory project that was born within empire, but also against and beyond empire. Hardt and Negri remind us it is crucial to understand love as ‘an enormous potential of subjectivity,’ namely, love as a political concept, i.e., “the power to construct the democratic multitude that overcomes empire” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 351).

Jesus, Multitude, and Compassion

“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with

compassion for them, and healed their sick.” (Matt. 14: 14)

“And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.” (Mark 6: 34)

The encounter of Jesus and the multitude is dramatically depicted by both Matthew and Mark. Jesus saw them and they ‘moved’ Him! Jesus’ seeing them and His being moved by them are not two different phases of the encounter. Here is involved an ‘epistemology of feeling.’ Seeing is not always believing. Jesus’ disciples did not believe even though they saw the resurrected Jesus. But Jesus’ seeing the multitude is seeing from the gut feeling. Therefore, it brings about human compassion as well as true understanding of reality. The Greek for ‘being moved with compassion’ is ‘spranchnizomai’ which literally means to feel from the gut or in the intestines (spranch). Feeling from the gut is not sentimental but profound. It is usually accompanied with pains as well as deep compassion for the suffering ones.

The East Asian expression of ‘spranchnizomai’ is ‘jeong (qing).’ A Korean American theologian Wonhee Anne Joh defines jeong as “a Korean way of conceiving an often complex constellation of relationality of the self with the other that is deeply associated with compassion, love, vulnerability, and acceptance of heterogeneity as essential to life” (Joh 2006: xxi). The Chinese character of jeong consists of sim (heart) and cheong (blue). Sim is not simply heart but mind. Thus sim is translated into heart-mind. Sim is a typical word implying the epistemology of feeling. Being related to sim, jeong refers to the experiential understanding of both sa-jeong (how the things really are) and in-jeong (how the human feel). “Mothers ponder many things.” (Whitehead) Why? The reason is because they see their children from the gut, because their hearts are filled with jeong for their kids. Jeong points to the concreteness of the self’s feeling experiencing the other.

Ethic of Compassion

“As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, ‘This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the multitude away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.’” (Matt. 14: 15)

“Jesus called his disciples to Him and said, ‘I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.’” (Matt. 15: 32)

“It’s impossible to find anybody who does not become a thief after three hungry days.” (Korean proverb) But the multitude was with Jesus for three days without any food! They

might have joyfully survived because Jesus taught and healed them. But after three days it is no wonder that Jesus' disciples worried about the stomachs of the multitude. They suggested to Jesus to send the multitude away. The apparent cause of sending them away is to let them go to the villages to buy some food. But did they really believe the multitude had enough purchase power? No. Provably they wanted to avoid any 'material' problem after three day long 'spiritual' celebration of the Word of God.

Contrary to the disciples' attitude, Jesus had compassion for the people. He called the multitude 'these people' after He spent three days with them. 'These People' refers to the people of God, the people of the Kingdom, the people of Messiah, and even Jesus' own people because they "were like sheep without a shepherd." (Mark 6: 34) One of the prominent tasks of a shepherd is to feed the sheep. In Jesus' ministry there was no bifurcation between a material, secular ministry and a spiritual, sacred ministry. The material as the spiritual and the secular as the sacred is the quintessential of Jesus ministry of Incarnation. Thus Jesus was deeply concerned about his hungry people.

Why have we become apathetic to the poverty-stricken people suffering the consequences of economic globalization? Is it because we are not compassionate enough? Or is it because we lack a critical reflection on the project of economic globalization that is led by the ideology of unfettered market forces? What we really need is to cultivate the jeong for the multitude so that we become capable of understanding them from the gut with compassion. "Perhaps the theological task today is that of clear and bold geopolitical analysis matched with attention to the aspirations of a new multitude" (Jennings 2007: 17).

John Wesley had his own epistemology of jeong in his understanding of the poor people: "One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. Hence it is that, according to the common observation, one part of the world does not know what the other suffers. Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know: they keep out of the way of knowing it – and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart." (Sermon 98 "On Visiting the Sick," I.3, Works of John Wesley 3: 387-388)

Jesus' ethic of compassion as well as His epistemology of jeong must have been deeply rooted in the Jewish heritage of the prophetic denunciation and annunciation in the issues of food insecurity within the wider framework of the farming and land policies of ancient empires. As followers of Jesus Christ we need to cultivate our keen prophetic awareness critical of the impact of imperial forms of power in the contemporary global capitalism.

In July of 1997 the currency exchange rate in Indonesia was one dollar for 1,250 rupiah. Then came the financial panic (the so-called IMF crisis) that devastated the currencies of Thailand and Malaysia and Taiwan and South Korea and also Indonesia. Four months later in

November of 1997, the rupiah was exchanging at the rate of one dollar for 14,000 rupiah! Their currency had lost 6/7ths of its value. Every bank, every major corporation in Indonesia was bankrupt. Massive unemployment followed. In the year following that financial crisis the infant mortality rate in Indonesia jumped 300 percent. Millions lost their jobs, millions never got to their first birthday; and not a single law was broken. Indeed, laws of international finance and banking were strictly followed; and money speculators and traders in New York and London made millions of dollars in profits (Raines 2005: 19).

Some of the effects of structural adjustment demanded by IMF are following. By dismantling trade barriers, local production was devastated. Flooded by cheap products from multinational corporations, local industries and agriculture went out of business. In Korea, rice farmers were put out of business by cheap rice imports from the United States and lost their land. American rice is cheap, not because American farmers are more efficient, but because these farmers and multinational rice distributors are subsidized by the U.S. government (Ruether 2005: 5-6). The last WTO round in Hong Kong showed that the farming capitals in the United States and Europe will continue to defend the interests of their agricultural, industrial and service sectors.

The contemporary empire is an empire of neo-liberal economy, one that worships the invisible hand of the market. At the heart of economic globalization is a new religion, the religion of the market. Then and now, Jesus' disciples' policy of sending the multitude away into the market is indeed merciless, heartless, pitiless, and completely devoid of jeong. Jesus, on the contrary, did organize the multitude: "Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties." (Mark 6: 39-40) As Jesus' disciples we are tempted to give in to the merciless domination of the market and to play to the pitiless rules of greed and to conform to political and military power when we should align ourselves with the multitude of the poor and excluded people. We are also tempted to advocate for the rich and powerful instead of advocating for those workers and bonded laborers who work under exploitative conditions and are deprived of their rights to form trade unions.

What is the effect of jeong in the miracle of feeding the multitude? The liberal and rational interpretation of the miracle emphasizes a miraculous transformation of human hearts in which the people's selfish hearts were transformed and then the people brought the loaves of bread and dried fish. What is missing in the liberal interpretation is the interactive aspect of the miracle taken place between heaven and earth, Jesus and people. It is crucial to notice the profound difference between this miracle and the satanic temptation to make the stone into the bread. Why did Jesus resist the temptation? He resisted it because He did not want to take the place of God who created out of nothing. Jesus' miracle is not creatio ex nihilo but creatio in situ

(creation in situation). It is His participation in the creative power of God. In the Confucian tradition every being shares creativity with heaven. It is called sung (cheng in Chinese). Sung is analogous to Whitehead's notion of the creative process as "the production of novel togetherness" (Ames and Hall 2001:31). Sung is process defined by the uniqueness and persistence of the constitutive relationships that define a particular "event (wu)." Zhongyong 25 speaks to this:

"Creativity (sung) is self-consummating, and its way is self-directing. Creativity is process taken from its beginning to its end, and without this creativity, there are no events. It is thus that, for exemplary persons, it is creativity that is prized. But creativity is not simply the self-consummating of one's own person; it is what consummates events. Consummating oneself is authoritative conduct; consummating other events is wisdom. This is the excellence of one's natural tendencies and is the way of integrating what is more internal and what is more external. Thus, whenever one applies this excellence, it is fitting" (2001: 32).

Appropriating the Confucian insight, we may understand the miracle of feeding the multitude in terms of the creative realization of both the self (Christ) and the other (the multitude) participating in the co-creative process of heaven and earth.

"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke the loaves, Then He gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all." (Mark 6: 41)

The Protestant interpretation of the miracle centers at the Christological kerygma that the wonder-making Jesus is the new Moses of the eschatological period. The Catholic interpreters of the miracle, however, tend to read the sacramental implication of Jesus' gesture in his performance of the miracle. It is very significant to note how Jesus' liturgical action works in the miracle story.

First, Jesus took the food cooked and produced on earth.

Second, Jesus looked up to heaven and gave thanks.

Third, Jesus broke the breads and gave them to his disciples to set before the people.

We need to pay attention to the last part of his action: "to set (the food) before the people!" Why is it so significant? The whole Jesus liturgical/religious actions such as taking the food, looking up to heaven to give thanks, and breaking the breads are the prelude to the final consummation of setting the food before the people. It is a revolutionary performance of moving the food set before the altar to the place before the people! A few years after the failure of the

Donghak Peasant Revolution (1894) Si-hyung Choi, during his escape in a remote village of South Korea, taught a less than ten followers about the setting the rice bowl before the people. It was the revolutionary renewal of the Confucian rite of ancestor worship in which the rice had been set before the wall where the tablet of one's ancestor stood. Celebrating this great event, Ji-ha Kim wrote a poem on rice:

Rice is heaven.
As you alone cannot have heaven,
rice you share to eat.
Rice is heaven.
As we together see the stars in heaven,
rice we altogether eat.
As rice enters your mouth,
heaven we receive in our body.
Rice is heaven.
Oh, Oh, Rice
is the thing we all share to eat.

Perhaps one of fine illustrations of a revolutionary 'jeong that overcomes han' (Jennings: 17) comes from a scene in the contemporary Korean film, the Monster. When a young girl was taken by the monster, the rest of the family set out on the quest for her liberation. Being exhausted after a while, they sat around to have supper. Despite her absence every one of them imagined that the young girl was with them and they shared the food with her. This made them a family with jeong so that they became the instrument of justice to destroy the monster that terrorized the Korean nation.

The Korean word for family member is sikgu. Sikgu literally means eating mouth. So as a matter of courtesy Koreans usually ask you how many eating mouths do you have in your family? The wording of sikgu might not have come from the Confucian literati class who did not respect physical labor. Rather it must have been originated from the toiling minjung who grew the rice and ate the rice together.

It is remarkable to find that jeong as well as sung is related to co-creativity of heaven and earth in the Zhongyong. In the Book of the Mean the great effect of jeong is described as following:

“The moment at which joy and anger, grief and pleasure, have yet to arise is called a nascent equilibrium (zhong); once the emotions have arisen, that they are all brought into

proper focus (zhong) is the great root of the world; harmony then is the advancing of the proper way (dadao) in the world. When [human] equilibrium and focus is sustained and harmony is fully realized, heaven and earth maintain their proper places and all things flourish in the world” (Ames and Hall: 89-90).

The letter wha (he) meaning harmony consists of two characters meaning rice and mouth. If we interpret Zhongyong 1 from the perspective of minjung, the harmony of heaven and earth that makes all things flourish is not a matter of quiet meditation of a sage but a matter of mouths eating rice with jeong. As the phrase “once the emotions (jeong) have arisen,” the important question is how revolutionary jeong can arise so that heaven and earth maintain their proper place and all things flourish in the world, i.e., the food is set before the multitude to receive heaven?

According to Mencius, “The people will not have constant hearts if they are without constant means, they will go astray and fall into excesses, stopping at nothing” (Bell 2002: 4). This means the ethic of compassion is based on the economy of love.

Economy of Love

“As I see it, the ruler is dependent on the nation, and the nation is dependent on the people. The king considers the people as heaven, but the people consider food as heaven. When the people lose their heaven, the nation loses the thing upon which it depends. This is an unchanging principle.” (Works of Yulgok 5: 379)

The first priority of the good government in the Confucian tradition is to secure the material welfare of the people. There are two ways of government: the kingly way and the way of the despot. The way of the despot who is caught up by greed and loses self-control harms people. The despot privately gives small favor to people and the favored ones jump in joy. The effect of the kingly way reaches the whole public and the people are broad-minded and self-contented.

The rule of Herod during Jesus’ time was despotic. While the multitude was going astray in hunger outside the palace, Herod “gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee.” (Mark 6: 21) The despot appointed by the empire favored his own high officials, the chiefs of the Roman military forces, and the local landlords of Galilee. But he beheaded the prophet protesting against the way of the despot. It is significant to notice that Jesus was considered John the Baptist resurrected by the despot as well as by the people. And it is no wonder that the people of Galilee tried to make Jesus king by force.

(John 6:15)

The Four Gospels report that Jesus affirmed himself as a king when Pilate asked him whether he was the king of the Jews. (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15: 2; Luke 23: 3; John 18: 37) Then what is Jesus' way of the king? The story of feeding the multitude clearly demonstrates the material well-being of the people as the top priority of Jesus' way of the king. In this regard Jesus is nearer to Confucians than to his own disciples. According to the Analects (13.9),

“The Master was on his way to Wei, and Ran Qiu was driving. The Master said: ‘So many people!’ Ran Qiu said: ‘Once the people are many, what next should be done?’ – ‘Enrich them.’ – ‘Once they are rich, what next should be done?’ – ‘Educate them’ ” (Bell: 4).

People must be educated so that they can develop their moral nature. However, the government must provide for their material welfare. There is no point promoting moral behavior if people are worried about their next meal. Yulgok's statement that food is the heaven of the people points to the core of the kingly way. As the people's livelihood became the primary concern of government, Confucians stressed the king's role as a provider of sustenance. In the kingly way ruler and subject stand in the nutritive relationship of parent and child. Yulgok writes:

“The heart of the kingly way lies in playing the role of parent for people. Easing the burden of labor for nation and enriching people, food which people considers heaven is abundant and people can preserve their good hearts.” (Yulgok: 379-380)

When the parent sees a child about to fall into a well, he or she cannot help a feeling of alarm and commiseration. And this shows the humanity (in) of the parent forms one body with the child. A holy king of the ancient times, according to Yulgok, was so hard-working for the beloved people that he even forgot to eat rice (Yulgok: 380). This reminds us of Jesus and his disciples who “did not even have a chance to eat.” (Mark 6: 31) It is not merely a matter of the good old days of China and Israel but a serious concern even for our times of the empire. Confucians' having the heart of commiseration which is the clue for the morality of humanity is not far from contemporary Americans' paying attention to the weak members of society:

“Giving attention to a crying infant is something good; working at McDonald's in order to have the money to buy designer jeans rather than studying does little to develop a fuller life or the capacity to contribute to society. Attending and caring or caring for are closely related. Because we have let too much of our lives be determined by processes ‘going over our heads,’ we have settled for easy measures that have distracted us from what needs to be attended to

and cared for. One way of defining democracy would be to call it a political system in which people actively attend to what is significant” (Bellah et al. 1992: 273).

Attention is not merely a descriptive and psychological notion but a normative and ethical notion. As one follows attention, “we move to ever larger social and cultural circles: from self-cultivation, to concern for the family, to our local communities and the vast cities most of us live in, to our national life and life in the world” (1992: 273). This reminds us of the long and arduous process of Confucian sage-learning incorporating self-cultivation, regulation of the family, governing of the state, and making peace under heaven (Cf. the Great Learning) ‘Inward sage and outward king’ is the Confucian ideal from the king to the common people.

The Confucian vision of the kingly way culminates in the classical vision of ‘the great unity’ (daedong) in which the whole household of humankind is covered by the sea of humanity (in):

“When the great way is practiced, the whole world becomes one commonwealth. And the good and capable persons are appointed for the up-building of trust and harmony in society. Then the people do not confine their filial piety only for their parents and do not limit their attention only to their children. The old have place to stay. The young have place to work. The children have place to grow. Widow, widower, orphan, the single, the sick, and the disabled have place to depend on. Since there is no conspiracy and no thief, people do not close their doors. This is called the great unity” (Yulgok: 397-398).

Is this a too much utopian daydream unrealizable in our corrupt world? Or is it still a matter of hope in face of difficulty and uncertainty? One of the contemporary American politicians calls it the audacity of hope and dares to affirm a belief in ‘one American family’:

“If there is a child on the south side of Chicago who can’t read, that matters me, even if it’s not my child. If there is a senior citizen somewhere who can’t pay for their prescription drugs, and having to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it’s not my grandparent. If there’s an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties” (Obama 2006: 6).

The great king Wu in the ancient China said, “Be affectionate for people. Do not treat them contemptuously. They are the fundamental of the state. If the fundamental is firm, the state is peaceful.” (Yulgok: 357) One of the Confucian commentators interprets the lesson of Wu: “If the relationship of the king and the people is understood from the standpoint of power

(seh), the difference between the two is like the distance between heaven and earth. But if the relationship of the king and the people is understood from the standpoint of jeong, they comfort each other as the members of the body help one another to live. Power increases the distance while jeong affectionately unite” (Yulgok: 357-358).

The critical distinction between the kingly way and the way of the despot is derived from the discernment of the priority of justice over profit. “Collecting the riches, the people disperse. Spreading the riches, the people gather. The benevolent one raises the body by (spreading) riches while the un-benevolent one raises riches by the body” (Yulgok: 371). Profit is allowed to people, but any privatization of riches is not allowed for the king. The king ought to look after the ‘three non-privates’: “Heaven does not privately cover ten thousand things, earth does not privately carry ten thousand things, sun and moon do not privately shine on ten thousand things” (Yulgok: 372).

The striking contrast between the kingly way and the way of the despot is most powerfully witnessed in the Fourth Gospel. The kingly way of Jesus appears not as the way of the sovereign but as the way of the crucified. Of course, God alone is sovereign as Jesus told Pilate: “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above.” (John 19: 11) All power is accountable to God. And we need to reflect on the question of power and empire from the perspective of the crucified king. There is no third way between ‘a friend of Caesar’ and ‘a (crucified) king opposing Caesar.’ (John 19: 12) Thus the Apostles’ Creed goes “suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.” We should not demonize the representatives of the empire. Yet we need to oppose the empire even to provoke its representatives to confrontation. Every way of the king as well as of the despot must be brought under the judgment of the way of the crucified king.

The rise of Japan and subsequently the Four Mini-Dragons (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) as the most dynamic area of sustained economic growth since World War II demands the reassessment of the Confucian role in East Asian modernity. According to the so-called post-Confucian hypothesis, the key variable in explaining the economic performance of these counties is post-Confucian ethics in the sense that the moral values in question are now relatively detached from the Confucian tradition proper and have become more widely diffused. Robert Bellah has coined the happy phrase ‘bourgeois Confucianism’ to distinguish this from the high Confucianism of the ruling elite of traditional East Asia. Some of the Confucian-derived values such as a positive attitude to the affairs of this world, a sustained lifestyle of discipline and self-cultivation, respect for authority, frugality, and overriding concern for stable family life must have been relevant to the work ethic and the overall social attitudes of the region (Berger 1988: 7).

Tu Weiming emphasizes the role of the Confucian family ethics in making a positive contribution to the economic development and social stability of East Asian countries: "Either the corporate spirit of industrial East Asia or the feudal ghost of Communist East Asia is infused with a strong dose of Confucian familism" (Tu 1995: 213-214). Even the Chinese Communist Party has rectified its previous anti-Confucian stance. The Chinese Communist Party put an end to Confucian principles of land distribution, by abolishing all forms of local community autonomy and household responsibility for farming and forcing farmers to work for state-owned communes. Far from enriching the people, however, this system led to massive inefficiencies. In 1978, Deng Xiaoping launched a rural land reform program. State-owned communes were replaced by the household-responsibility system. This system has been widely credited with underpinning China's rapid economic development and the consequent improvement of the material welfare of the people since the time (Bell: 6).

More recently, a neo-Confucian revival movement has taken shape among East Asian scholars who aim to explicitly promote Confucian values in society and government. Nevertheless, most of contemporary Confucian intellectuals are aware of the ambiguity of Confucian ethics because the East Asian strength in maintaining social stability and the East Asian weakness in developing full-fledged democracy are both intimately intertwined with Confucian ethics. For instance, political leaders such as the former prime minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew seem to be motivated by the need to justify their authoritarian rule in the face of increasing demands of democracy rather than by a sincere commitment to the Confucian tradition. Lee has long maintained that cultural differences make the Western concept of democracy and human rights inapplicable to East Asia. However, the former Korean president Kim Dae Jung argues that the major obstacle to establishing democracy in Asia is not its cultural heritage but the resistance of authoritarian rulers. Asia has as rich a heritage of democracy-oriented philosophies and traditions as any Western society. Long before John Locke, Mencius formulated the idea of minben zhengchi (people-based politics) as well as popular revolution (Han 1999: 2).

The cover story of the Newsweek on March 22 of 2006 is "Resurrection of Confucius: the Survival Tactic of the Chinese Communist Party for the 21st Century." The former chairman Jiang Zemin had turned to Confucianism in response to the crisis of legitimacy and the widespread social malaise that threatened to undermine the Chinese Communist Party. Recently the chairman Hu Jintao mentioned, "Confucius said, 'Treasure harmony.'" For the Chinese government neither the stubborn governance of Marx-Leninism nor the anarchic governance of Democracy fits its situation. The Chinese option is a benevolent tyranny utilizing the Confucian ideology of the kingly way. Its emphasis on harmonious society can easily fall into the false harmony between the poor in the agricultural China and the rich in the industrial cities

on the one hand, and between the majority of the Chinese race and the minority of other races such as Tibetans in Southwestern China and Koreans in Northeastern China on the other. It is noteworthy that the theme of the 2008 Peking Olympiad is 'heshe' (harmony). The historical prototype of the harmonious China is 'The Prosperous Dang Empire' in the 7th century.

Therefore, there is a strong need for a critical re-examination of Confucianism by means of 'subversive genealogy' which is a specific postcolonial approach to tradition in the age of globalization (Han: 10). This method consists of deconstructing the mainstreams of tradition deeply associated with maintaining the status quo on the one hand, and of reconstructing an alternative way of reading traditions on the other. Deconstruction is necessary because tradition could have been misused to legitimate the relationship with power or the ideology of the ruling class. It is also inescapable in the Confucian cultural sphere of East Asia where modernization and globalization have brought up the universal issues of democracy, human rights, and economic justice.

In Korea and China, the subversive voices serving for criticizing authoritarian regimes deviating from Confucian norms mostly came from "the ranks of orthodox neo-Confucians – not from among Buddhists or Taoists. The latter were, as we say, out of it, not engaged in the kind of struggle religion waged against Caesar in the West. In this respect Confucianism – not a teaching usually considered 'religious' – performed the critical function Max Weber assigned to religion as the effective bearer of compelling, transcendental values in vital tension with the world, while Buddhism and Taoism, normally considered 'religions,' barely did do" (de Bary 1991: 58). The Korean students' protest against autocracy during the past several decades was, in fact, strongly supported by Confucian moral traditions in which intellectuals were seen as representing the voice of the people, which was, in turn, assumed inseparable from heaven. It is well known that the public sphere, though limited in terms of participants, functioned quite effectively both inside and outside the dynastic regimes: Inside by censors acting to check imperial misrule, and outside by Confucian intellectuals remonstrating against the corruption and abuses of the ruling elite. Since the 17th century even the common people in Korea began to participate in the communication with the king: for instance, during the rule of the king Jeongcho in the 18th century there were about 4,427 cases for which the common people directly appealed to the king (Han 2005: 7). The minjung participatory tradition reached its peak at the Donghak Revolution in the 19th century when the Korean nation fell into the double jeopardy of both domestic corruption and foreign imperialistic threat.

The Donghak movement envisioned an economy of love which the crucified king dreamed of (John 6: 35-40)

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry,

and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Jesus' saying that He is rice from heaven is the revolutionary inversion of the empire. Jesus invites the multitude as His own sikgu (eating mouths). When they share rice from heaven to eat, wha (rice and mouth), namely, harmony is truly achieved. This is not only the truth of the Eucharist but the essence of Jesus' economy of love. The second leader of Donghak, Haewall, was most prominent in promulgating economy of love. Haewall's teaching and practice to move the rice bowl from the altar to the self was epoch-making in the sense that it overcame the demonic dichotomy between daily meal and the sacrifice. Jesus' Last Supper was both the sacrifice as daily meal and daily meal as the sacrifice. It goes beyond the meaning of feeding the multitude in the sense that the boundary of sharing rice from heaven was passed over from Jews to all people: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." (Mark 14: 24) The Lord's Supper is not so much a matter of feeding 'the sheep' but dining as love feast. The circle of dining table in the early church grew larger and larger to embrace the whole sphere of the Roman Empire. The early church as a persecuted minority responded to the Roman Empire's global demonstration of power by developing an alternative form of community with the establishing of a network between local communities which transcended national, cultural and political boundaries. This conciliar structure of the early church became an increasingly powerful alternative to the imperial structure. A re-appropriation of this early ecumenical response to the challenge of globalization might help in finding the appropriate perspective for the 21st century.

In the framework of economy of love the way of the crucified king ought to be re-connected to the messianic praxis of keeping the Sabbath and the Jubilee. At the local level of the Korean evangelical churches Sabbath keeping and tithe giving has been quite effectively practiced. It is the strength of committed Korean Christians in evangelism and mission. However, it is doubtful whether the Korean churches have been faithful to the stewardship to obey the Lord of the Sabbath by sharing not only spiritual blessing but also material blessing with the poor. The renewal of the Korean Christianity celebrating the centennial Great Revival in 2007 must start from the recovery of the messianic praxis of keeping the Sabbath in both evangelism and economic life.

In July, 2007 more than 70 thousand Korean Christians gathered at the World Cup

Stadium in Seoul to have the centennial celebration of the Revival. Rev. Ok, one of the most respected pastors, powerfully preached on Rev. 3:1-3:

“To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.”

Rev. Ok challenged the Korean Christians to repent the sin of corrupting the Gospel by separating faith from works. When he was delivering his sermon, several hundred non-regular workers were demonstrating in the mall area of the same stadium. The company to which they belong is own and run by a committed Christian lay leader who gives the tithe of his earning for evangelism. The problem of non-regular workers has become serious in Korea since the 1997 IMF crisis. From the perspective of corporate interests, labor represents a cost factor that must be reduced in order to increase competitiveness and profitability. If Korean Christians want to repent for a genuine revival, their repentance must be translated into economy of love. Otherwise, Jesus' promise of eternal life will be taken away by the messiah coming like a thief.

The discipleship training in the contemporary Korean Christianity should be reformulated in the light of economy of love. The problem of global capitalism has to be studied and challenged by the local congregations. They need to be inspired by the divine 'oikonomia' (economy) of love manifested in the crucified king's being the rice from heaven for the whole household of one life. As they pray the Lord's Prayer for daily rice, they are obliged to concern and act for 1.2 billion people who live on an income of less than 1 US dollar per day and 2.8 billion people who have less than 2 US dollars per day. As they pray the Lord's Prayer for the forgiving of their debts as they forgive those who sin against them, they are summoned by the crucified king to proclaim with the audacity of hope the Jubilee Year of the Lord, the cancellation of debt, the release of the captives and rest for the land.

The most serious contradiction in the system of global capitalism is the dramatic increase of international indebtedness of developing countries. The system of global capitalism does not allow the abolition of the state of debt bondage that is crippling the prospects of recovery for a growing number of countries. One of the consequences of debt crisis is food insecurity in the countries of the global South. The pressure to integrate their economies into a grossly unequal world market has eroded the capacity of many countries to provide for the basic food requirements of their own populations and increased their dependency on transnational

agro-business (Raiser 2002: 21). As Nancy Cardoso writes:

“The divine beings vying to bring ‘our daily bread’ to our tables feed not only on the total control of the processes of food production and distribution, but are also gobbling up the forms of consumption represented by quick-moving fast-food outlets. Today, world trade in agricultural products – especially cereals, meat and dairy products – is controlled by no more than twenty oligopolistic groups of transnational corporations located in the United States and Europe. ‘Give us this day our daily bread, O Monsanto, Cargill, Swift, Anglo, ADM, Nestle, Danone, Syngenta, Bunge!’ ” (Cardoso 2005: 1).

Although slavery has been abolished in the 19th century, there is still another form of economic slavery which perpetuates the bondage of the impoverished people to debt and to exploitation in the name of the laws of nations and international financial institutions. It is not enough to be critically aware of global debt crisis. To participate in economy of love in solidarity with the poverty-stricken people requires the recovery of heart-felt jeong which is the ground of the ethic of compassion. Only the one who goes for inward journey seeking the poverty of heart can go for outward journey practicing agape economy for the poor. And this must be Wesleyan dynamics of religion of heart combined with social religion or social holiness. Wesley says to the captains of the slave ships:

“Are you a man? Then you should have a human heart. ... Is there no such principle as compassion there? Do you never feel another’s pain? ... Today resolve, God being your helper, to escape for your life. Regard not money! ... Whatever you lose, lose not your soul: Nothing can countervail that loss. Immediately quit the horrid trade” (“Thoughts upon Slavery,” V.3, Works in Jackson edition 11: 77).

Wesleyans believe that sanctification must involve depriving money of its reigning power in the hearts of the human because the economic factors, however important for the life of the individual and of the nation, is to be subsumed under the human factor (i.e., ethic of compassion) and the divine will (of economy of love). Yulgok advised his king to apply ‘the virtue to love letting (the people) live’ (ho saeng gi duk) to governance. (Yulgok: 369-370). According to Yulgok, when the people become poor wanderers in their own land because the rulers lose the right way, the first responsibility of the king is to realize the sa jeong (how the things really are) of the people who cannot help committing sin in the violation of the law. The king should not be happy about the situation, but he should be sorrowful for his own sin and compassionate for the sinning people. To know the sa jeong of the people and to have the in

jeong (how the human feel) for the people is the starting point to cultivate the ethic of compassion and to practice the economy of love.

References

- Ames, Roger T. and Hall, David L (2001). *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong*. University of Hawaii Press.
- de Bary, Wm. Theodore (1991). *The Trouble with Confucianism*. Cambridge,Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bell, Daniel A (1999). "Confucian Values for the Next Millennium." Paper delivered at International Conference on Universal Ethics and Asian Values. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO. Seoul.
- Bellah, Robert N., et al. (1992). *The Good Society*. First Vintage Books Edition.
- Berger, Peter (1998). "An East Asian Development Model?" In *Search of an East Asian Development Model*. Eds. Peter Berger and Hsin-huang Michael Hsiao. Transaction Books.
- Cardoso, Nancy (2005). "Empire and Religion: Gospel, Ecumenism, and Prophecy for the 21st Century." Paper delivered at the WCC Ninth Assembly. Porto Alegre.
- Jennings, Ted (2007). "Ethics, Economy, Empire." Paper delivered at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul.
- Joh, Wonhee (2006). *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Han, Sang-Jin (1999). "On the Prospects of Confucian Values Contributing to a Global Shared Ethic: The Case for the Postcolonial Appropriation of an East Asian Tradition." Paper delivered at the International Conference on Universal Ethics and Asian Values. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO. Seoul.
- (2005). "Kwangju Minjung Struggle and a Communitarian Consideration on Human Rights: Confucianism and Participatory Democracy." www.humanrights.or.kr.
- Hardt and Negri (2000). *Empire*. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Books.
- (2004). *Multitude*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Obama, Barack (2006). "The Audacity of Hope: 2004 Democratic National Convention Keynote Adress." www.americanrhetoric.com.
- Raines, John C. (2005). "Religious Extremism and Globalization." Paper delivered at Religion and Social Transformation Seminar in Seoul.

- Raiser, Konrad (2002). For a Culture of Life: Transforming Globalization and Violence. World Council of Churches.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford (2005). Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Tu, Weiming (1995). "Confucianism." Our Religions. Ed. Arvind Sharma. HarperSanFrancisco.
- Wesley, John. The Oxford Edition of the Works: Vol. 3. Oxford: Clarendon Press..
. The Works of the Rev. John Wesley: Vo. 3. Jackson Edition.
- Yulgok. The Collective Works: Vol. 5. Seoul: Minjok Munwha Mungo Publishing.