

International Conference on Peace and Reunification on the Korean Peninsula  
(Dec.3-5, 2015)

## <Justice and Time, humane time>

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'For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; 4and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. 5When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 6And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" 7They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." 8When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." 9When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. 10Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." 13But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. (Matthew 20:1-14)

“Mencius said, ‘The ability possessed by men and women without having been acquired by learning is their intuitive ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of thought is their intuitive knowledge. Children carried in the arms all know to love their parents, and when they are grown a little, they all know to love their elder brothers. Filial affection for parents is the working of humanity. Respect for elders is the working of justice. There is no other reason for those feelings, they belong to all under heaven.’(Mencius, Jin Xin 盡心 I:15)”

## I.

Nowadays, human lives are greatly at stake: On the night of Friday, November 13, IS attacked Paris killing 129 men and women. Immediately, President Hollande of France declared a war against the IS and set out to chase and attack the terrorists. Facing such tragic terror that occurred in the heart of Paris, the global community is concerned that the most dreadful form of terrorism has just begun, whose targets, times, cities, and status and nationality have gone far beyond our imagination. Now, acts of terrorism for mass killing with small craters may take place any part of the world and anytime in our everyday life. That is to say that the world is now entering into the state of the war of all for all, and it has proved Pope Francis’ word of the last September that the world is now undergoing the third world war.

## II.

Reflected in Matthew 20:1-14 is Gandhi’s favorite word, “sarbodaya.” As stated in his autobiography, <An Experiment with Truth>, Mahatma Gandhi, the nonviolent movement leader of India, was decisively influenced by John Ruskin(1819-1900), the British social critic. From Ruskin, Gandhi learned the word, “Unto this last,” which he later translated into Gujarati as “sarvodaya,” “the welfare of all.” He explained how he understood this word in the three formulations:

1) A person’s well-being is contained in the well-being of all people.

- 2) The value of the work of a barber is the same as that of a lawyer, because everyone has the same right to earn his livelihood through his/her work.
- 3) A Life of physical work, for example, the lives of farmers and craftsmen, is most valuable.

### III.

Ordinary speaking, the land owner paying those who came late and worked only an hour as much as those who came early and worked eight hours appears to be unfair. Today, the world economy under the neo-liberalism insists that all people in/of all countries are equally right to play games under the same, and that the more capable is one, the more income makes one. It is namely the rule of ability-egalitarianism. On the contrary, however, God's reign in Matthew invites and welcomes and is generous to those who, for various reasons, arrived late at the vineyards and/or probably less capable. Thus, it presents what divine justice and fairness is like. Justice of God's reign breaks and goes against our common understanding of time, and thwarts our one dimensional sense of time and factual concepts.

In this consideration, to us, here and now, who are belated? Are they those Syrian refugees who are arriving now after long dangerous and tiring voyages? Are they those stateless undocumented? Or are they those young people who are struggling to have life, to have dreams for future, yet discouraged and fallen or falling in despair? Are they those North Korean defectors trying to settle in S. Korea? I believe that we are also where we are today socially, economically and politically, thanks to those who have cared for us, supported us, and guided us. Then, can we demand those who came after us and are struggling for daily living of the same rule like today's ability-egalitarianism is doing? Is it unfair that we care for them, support them, and help them?

### IV.

In our second reading, Confucian Mencius presents also another dimension of

justice and time. Mencius was born 370 years before Jesus' birth and lived during an age of war and violence, so called "the Warring States period (戰國時代)." Despite such circumstances during his life, Mencius persistently insisted on the innate goodness of human nature, and stressed that all human beings own the innate knowledge of the good and the innate ability of performing it. He saw the familial life as the starting point for the basic human ability to be actualized. According to Mencius, humanity is aroused from one's act of loving one's parents (親親), and justice (義) starts from one's act of respecting those who came before oneself and so are older than oneself (敬長).

Mencius's justice as "revering the older" may imply multiple meanings, because in this time and age, an age of material utilitarianism counts usually the value in relation to physical youth or strength, so that aging or physical weakness are easily put aside as invaluable. Accordingly, the past and tradition, ageing, and the value of the origin are neglected, and the past omitted from the matter of justice. However, Mencius insists that humane justice take the past into consideration. It is because we, the younger generations, are standing on the foundation that the old have founded with all that they had and with all they did, while they are now weak and ailing, unable to speak out as they used to. It means that Mencius' understanding of justice lets us very practically and actually recognize our human being as conditioned one, and I think justice becomes actualized where people see their conditioned reality. So, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), one of the most influential political philosophers of the twentieth century, formulated human virtue like this, while she hoped that in more humanized world this virtue can play the role of justice; "Virtue is happy to pay the price of limited power for the blessing of being together with other men."(Essay Essays in Understanding 1930-1954)

v.

To us today, who are those who have arrived earlier before us and so are older and weak, tired and sick? Are they the people of Africa—the land of human origin? The people of Palestine before Israel was founded in 1948? Those who used to live in the former East Germany before the unified Germany? As for me,

with these imaginative thinking, my idea goes firstly to the North Korean people, when I came here to this conference especially with the cause of our nation's reunification and peace. The origin of our nation started in the northern part of the peninsula. And in relation to the beginning of modern evangelization of our nation, South is heavily indebted to North. Therefore, I ask if we can't regard North Korea as our elder for whom we gladly express our respect and reverence in recognition what they had played a significant role as a big brother or a big sister.

While pondering the 11.13.2015 incident of terror in Paris, I was asking myself: how can we ask the same degree of justice from the young people of Islamic immigrant families who have lost their parents to harsh labor work for living, and didn't have enough chance to have intimate contacts with their family members. They might not learn naturally how they honor their elders or the others, so the beginning of the mind of justice couldn't well develop in their heart. So when we expand this idea even into the matter of the understanding of other wars and terroristic activities on our earth home, in my view, those can be comprehended as the results which are narrowly related with our ignorance and dishonoring of elder generations, earlier arrived to our earth home, people who delivered to us so many things, and our negligence of their children and their next generations.

## VI.

Now I like to speak briefly how natural human lives in South Korea are also distorted because of the long division of our nation. I say this to show how urgently we need the reunification and the emancipation from the long history of ideological conflict. In the South Korean society these days, the word "Jongbuk-Jwappal," meaning extreme leftists following North Korean ideology, has become a word of ideological supersense, carrying out its omnipotent power to every area and every moment of our communal lives. It is the language which is related with the thought of your nation's son Karl Marx, and still negatively exercising immense power in us. Individuals, organizations, and government use JJ as a conventional language to threaten, silence, and/or destroy the critical voices

toward the conservative in the Korean society and history in the past and at present. This phenomenon causes fear and distrust among friends, coworkers and colleagues at work places. Even family members do not exchange their opinions and minds with each other or hesitate to do so because of the fear of being labeled as Jongbuk-Jwappal. Thus, such ideological language is killing our political life, creating church blunt to violence and injustice and stagnating our academia, while making our culture and society continually contaminated with pretense and extravagance. In addition, this harmful language has caused a severe division in South Korea, east and west. People's minds and lives are overshadowed with fear and distrust, and it makes everybody an island, scattering them into fearful loneliness and isolation. Can you imagine how this kind of life environments may feel?

## VII.

However, in the 18th century, G.E. Lessing (1729-1781), another son of yours, has declared that regardless of our religion, status, political stance, or nationality, it is enough for us to be friends that we are all human beings. He argued that our ideological fight for "truth" is not more valuable than our friendships and harmonious coexistence. According to him, truth is not of a matter of objectivity, something fixed, that hinders us from thinking and dialoguing. Instead, it is an organism that enables us to think and dialogue. Hannah Arendt told us in her book <Men in Dark Times> that Lessing had been the trustful light of humanity illuminating the world in dark times and reducing horror to openness and humane sense. "Are we not both human beings?" "For our friendship, our humaneness itself is enough, and we must, must be friends." were Lessing's and his Nathan the wise's words and messages for the openness to the world and to a genuine friendship of humanness.

I think that both the landowner's justice for the belated in Matthew 20 and Mencius' justice and time through respect for the elder and elderly teach us similarly the meaning of true justice and time; that is, "humane time" and "humanized justice." I do hope that through our gathering of this time, we also

become more aware and mindful to such humanized justice and humane time. When Europe was in turmoil in the midst of the French Revolution about 300 years ago, the haves were not letting go of what they owned for the have nots. To them, H. Pestalozzi (1746-1827) said, "In the middle of our society, is there really no place where the people's nature can be satisfied who have no possession in this world, but live under the seven times heavier social contract's burden? The possessors of this land, are you not afraid? What matters in this case is not relief work but basic premises, not favor (grace) but independence and rights."(Pestalozzi's *Meine Nachforschungen ueber den Gang der Natur in der Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts*).

### VIII.

In Pestalozzi's time, these words must have been applied between European rich and poor, aristocrats and civilians, etc. In our contemporary time of globalization, however, it can be adopted for the relation between the rich North and the poor South, the Korean South and Korean North, or between us and past generations and young ones. As a possible way to reconcile those conflicts and hostilities, Confucian Mencius and Christian Jesus, both teach us humane justice and humane time. To the belated, the Christian Jesus wants to offer a place. According to Confucian Mencius, looking beyond the appearance of the old and weak to recognize works done and times invested by them is a true humanity. Feeding ourselves with these two sources of milk I hope that our humanity and civilization become more humane and that our friendships deepen. In actualizing these messages on our earth, Lessing's following word seems still wise: *Jeder sage, was ihm Wahrheit duenkt, und die Wahrheit selbst sei Gott empfohlen!*(Let each man say what he deems truth, and let truth itself be commended unto God!) Thank you so much for your invitation and hospitality! Your acting in togetherness for the Reunification and peace in Korea will remember forever!