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The decision of Pelasgos

In the drama ***The Suppliant*** by Aeschylus. Aegyptus, the brother of Danaids and the kind of Egypt decided that his sons should marry with Danaos’ daughters. However Danaos and his daughters refused such kind of arrangement. They choose to flee away. The Danaids cross the vast ocean and finally reach the shore of Argos. The very ground that belong to the King Pelasgos. Danaos and his daughters present a difficult problem to Pelasgos as soon as they step on the shore of Argos. The Danaids ask the king to protect them from being forced to marry with Aegyptos’ sons. However, this is not a quit simple petition that can be easily satisfied. Pelasgos, the king of Argos, has to keep the peaceful life of his people and provides his aid to those maidens from the other side of the ocean. After a serious thought, the king of Argos determines to give Danaids a hand. Pelasgos realizes that both his people and the gods want him to support those maidens. In the story of << The Suppliant >>, Pelasgos is a tragic hero, he’s central conflict is make a choice between the peace of Argos and the wellbeing of his kingdom. It’s a decision hard to make but at the end of the play, Pelasgos solves this issue.

The inner conflict of Pelasgos is whether to take Danaos and his daughters as refugee. As the king of Argos, Pelasgos have the responsibility to investigate any stangers who appears in his land. So when the first time Pelasgos meet the Danaids, he asks them where they comes from and what is the purpose of coming to Argos. Pelasgos is a patient person, he listens to the story and the miserable situation of those people. The Danaids tells the king that they are the descendant of the Cow blessed child. Pelasgos tells those women that they look like Libyan women, the distant strangers and foreigners. The kind emphasizes that he must protect his people from any possible dangerous. However, the Danaids convince Pelasgos about their real identities and confess that they actually are running away from the marriage with their cousins. After that, the Danaids state that they have sworn to god that they would never hand their body to Aegyptos’ sons and they plead to Pelasgos give them protection. In this part of the play, the king of Argos has to make his decision whether or not to help those women and put Argos at risk.

The dilemma that Pelasgos has to confront is the potential war between Egypt and Argos and the gods will. There are two sides of the problem and the sequence are different. On one hand, Pelasgos will become the enemy of Aegyptos if he protects those women and the war between them are unavoidable. The war will definitely affect many aspects of the Argos city, people will die and lose their properties. Pelasgos, the ruler of the city, have to be responsible for the people of Argos. He cannot take the maidens and cause the war without the support of his people. Pelasgos won’t do such a thing as the King of this land, people would like to live in a peaceful society.

In other side, the Danaids are the people who deserve the sympathy of the king. The gods seem like agree Pelasgos to offer his hand to the Danaids. In other words, Pelasgos will be considered as a cold blood person if he refuse the prayers of the Danaids. The king needs to get the power and support from his citizens.

In Pelasgos’ position, many things are at risk as soon as he decides to take the suppliants in. In Pelasgos’ words “a flood of evils is churning like a river” that eventually leads to “a bottomless sea of destruction”(25). Rejecting the pleading of Danaids means watching them be “seized as booty” in “the seat of so many gods”(23), which would risk divine wrath. The Danaids also will in threaten. On other side, Pelasgos cannot ignore that many of his citizens will die during the war against the Egypt in order to protect the Danaids. Providing refuge for the suppliants, Pelasgos risks the wrath of the gods by driving the Danaids to kill themselves and also puts his people in dangerous because defending the Danaids will surely incurring the war that organized by the angry sons of Aegyptos.

The choice that Pelasgos has is morally good but it will lead a disastrous consequence, leading the king of Argos to a status of helpless by this conflict like many other tragic heroes in the long river of human history and mythology. Although the situation is less bright, Pelasgos announces that his has get his power and support from his citizens and calls everyone prepare and fight for the war which is caused by their good will. Pelasgos made his choice that he will help the Danaids regardless of the cost if the citizens have the same thought as him. The Danaids are very lucky, the citizen of Argos also chose to support them by the full force of law and are strongly invested in the success of their cause. Pelasgos declares himself as the partron and sponsor of the Danaids when the army of Aegyptos’ angry sons arrival Argos.

In the story of *The Suppliants,* Pelasgos faces a complex delimma. The response of the king is the key factor in the development of this play. The fate of the Danaids are questioning Pelasgos’ morals and his reasonable thought. As a man of people, Pelasgos doesn’t want to refuse the pleading of the Danaids. It is impossible that Pelasgos can make a win-win decision to help those women without the cost of the peace of his city. Pelasgos chose to follow the mind of the gods and fight to the war that caused by the will being. The lucky thing is the citizens of Argos have the same kind of hot blood and beautiful heart to support their leader and protect those miserable women. The result of vote brings a touching resolution for the most burdensome conflict of the play.

Works Cited

Aeschylus *The Suppliants*, translated by Peter Burian. Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 1991.