

Rational Rendering of Confucian Relationships in Contemporary Korea

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Abstract

This paper aims at a theoretical understanding of Confucian authority relations in contemporary Korea, especially within the framework of rational choice and the concept of habitus (as in Bourdieu). First, we discuss the source of naturalization or the legitimate basis of Confucian authority, identifying how the age-differential hierarchy is rendered as the Durkheimian sense of sacred. Second, we trace the route of how Seongnihak, or Neo-Confucianism, was received and modified as an orthodox ethical principle and social ideology in the Joseon dynasty. Third, I will introduce discussions of the workings of Confucian authority as habitus. Then, we try to see how this habitus aspect can be revealed in its working on everyday practices. Fifth, some basic concepts and principles related with “separating equilibrium” in “information asymmetry” situation will be explained. Using these analytical tools, we try to answer how the ethical and formal principle of Confucian authority relation, the ye, is rationally explained in various social instances, in terms of distribution of social resources.

Keywords: Confucian authority, ye, Seongnihak, Neo-Confucianism, habitus, the sacred, information asymmetry, Weber thesis, ethical practice, word game, rationality

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To accept as a theme for discussion a category that one believes to be false always entails the risk, simply by attention that is paid to it, of entertaining some illusion about its reality. In order to come to grips with an imprecise obstacle one emphasizes contours where all one really wants is to demonstrate their insubstantiality, for in attacking an ill-founded theory the critic begins by paying it a kind of respect. The phantom which is imprudently summoned up, in the hope of exorcising it for good, vanishes only to reappear, and closer than one imagines to the place where it was at first.

– Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* –

The rules of rites do not go down to the common people. The penal statues do not go up to noble men.¹

– *The Book of Rites* –

Introduction

This paper will present a theoretical understanding of Confucian “authority” relations in contemporary Korea, especially within a framework of rational modeling and the concept of *habitus*, as it was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. The major discussions related to Confucianism, such as the famous Weber thesis (questioning why capitalism failed to emerge in Asia), the modernization thesis, and the more recent “Asian values” thesis, all focus on economic or developmental implications of Confucianism. However, these approaches overlook the fundamental question of how relationships in everyday life in contemporary Korea are deeply and even unconsciously molded by Confucian values, and how Confucian values, despite either the ignorance or the criticism heaped against them, continue to be reproduced and naturalized in everyday practices. Being conceived in terms of a *habitus*, the Confucian value-practice system, however, does not mean that people are just the “prisoner of structure” pas-

1. 禮下不庶人 刑不上大夫. *Liji*.

sively under the control of the Confucian cultural norm, but that the system of Confucian values and relations itself becomes the tools and frames for strategic practices of individuals in diverse social relations, and is thereby reproduced in continuous changes and local adjustments, often as an unintended outcome, by such minute and diverse strategic behaviors.

This paper will focus on Confucian authority relations, rather than Confucian cultural practices as a whole. The leading concern is on “reading the meaning of Confucianism today,” and more specifically, on how different readings can explain, as rationally as possible, the working mechanisms of Confucian authority in Korea.

Diagnosis

The last decade, especially around the time of the 1997 economic crisis, witnessed fluctuations in discussions, both in academic and nonacademic spheres, of so-called “Asian values,” which are in themselves notoriously confusing and misleading concepts. Once praised as a prototype of the materialistic productive power of culture, Confucian values were also indicted as the inveterate culprit for “crony capitalism” in Asian countries.

Talks and debates at diverse levels and in variable fashions, including Korean Broadcasting System (KBS)’s recent long-running lecture series on the Confucian *Analects*, served as an impetus to continuous discussions of the values or vices of Confucian culture. Discussions focused on Confucian culture’s actual and potential effects on the shaping of everyday life as well its implications on socioeconomic development in contemporary Korea (A book published recently was entitled, *Gongja-ga jugeoya nara-ga sanda* (Only with Confucius’s Death will Korea Survive!)). This paper will not attempt an evaluative assessment of Confucianism or a normative judgment on Confucian values, but rather focus on “how” and “in what form” Confucianism matters in Korea today.

Before Mao communism took over China in the mid-1930s, Lin Yutang, while introducing Confucianism to Western academics,

made the following remark (which looks in a sense rather a monologue to the Chinese themselves) that “as a political system aimed at the restoration of a feudal order, Confucianism will probably be put out of date by the developments of modern political science and economics. But as a system of humanist culture, as a fundamental viewpoint concerning the conduct of life and of society, I believe it will still hold its own” (Lin 1938, 4). Roughly fifty years after Lin’s remark, however, another authority on Confucianism from the United States, gave a mildly betraying diagnosis about today’s Confucian values. De Bary states:

Confucius identifies three main values: humaneness [*in*], rites [*ye*], and letters or scholarship [*mun*]. In this century Confucianism has been successfully buried (in the May Fourth Movement); disinterred and either desecrated or made a museum piece during the Mao era; and now revived as a live subject of sociological study (for example, the East Asian work ethic) or as a moral philosophy. Confucian humaneness has become easy to sell, if not to practice. The noble man [*gunja*] himself may well find a place in academia or the new world bureaucracy. Rites or riteness, however, seems to have no advocates in the modern world. Indeed a case could be made that the rites have been in decline, if not moribund, for centuries. What does this tell us about the viability of Confucianism, supported by only two feet, moral philosophy and scholarship, of the original tripod? (de Bary 1991, 45).

De Bary interprets *ye* (禮) as “rite” or “riteness” in this citation. He rightly observes that the riteness (*ye*) has lost its validity, or more precisely, its authentic meaning. It is not yet certain as to whether or how much Lin Yutang’s prophecy is the case in communist China today, but as for “concerning the conduct of life,” Lin’s prophecy seems to hold some water in Korea.

Soliloquy

I have to confess that I don’t know what Confucianism is about. I

can't even be sure whether it exists in contemporary Korean society at all. If it does exist, I am still unable to grasp how Confucianism lives on around us; I'm unsure whether it is authoritarian, reactionary, antifeminist, or ideological, or it is something authentic, precious, necessary and useful, worth further cultivation. Perhaps it is schizophrenic, Janus-faced. Pondering this thought, I am unable to articulate what Confucianism really is. Except only one thing: I just live it. Yes, I know I live it, and that is not a matter of choice regardless of my taste for it.

Almost unreflectively I bow to my seniors, always anxious to be the first to do so. I spot my seat quickly, yielding better ones to my seniors in seminar rooms, in restaurants, and everywhere else. I cultivate conscious awareness in using the correct predicate ending in my conversation with others, properly discriminating between seniors and juniors. And I take caution not to directly reject or decline my seniors' offers, but I emphasize that any rejection is simply my failure to accept their offer. The lore of appearing complaisant, the *savoir vivre*, I never need to understand, to agree (or disagree) on; it is just something simply to live by, and further, to live by almost habitually. Like an aura behind me, Confucian values permeate my thoughts and actions, lying dim but already there in the background before I start to think something or act something. As Durkheim said, “. . . in each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves” (requoted from Bourdieu 1977, 79). While surely “yesterday's man” has a grip on me, I could far less catch up with than he with me.

Myth

There exists a common myth: What is called “tradition,” a wholesale

term designating all those values and practices of the past, every nitty-gritty of the “modern,” is often regarded as the Burkean “eternal yesterday.” And what the contemporary Koreans refer to by “tradition” is mostly related to Confucianism. Korea has long been regarded as a country most faithful to Confucian values (in its authentic spirit at least). To be more precise, however, it is just one branch of a broader Confucian thought, Neo-Confucianism, that is in reality meant by the term “Confucian value” in Korea. The reason this tradition is better referred to as a myth is because these Confucian traditions and their related practices are of relatively recent origin, far from something of an ancient “archetype.” Roughly around the middle of seventeenth century, the *yangban* or scholar-official (*sadaebu*) of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) succeeded in dogmatizing Seongnihak, or Neo-Confucianism, as the orthodox ideology and in enforcing it throughout the whole country, despite considerable confusion and resistance. It is not our aim here to go to the historical details of that process in this paper; enough to note that the catchphrase “Confucianism as our tradition” is just another (contemporary) myth.

A time period of roughly 300 years is a bit too short to be (consciously or unconsciously) inscribed as the “eternal yesterday.” It is important to consider, then, how some specific Confucian values came to be equated as the “Korean tradition.” The point here is not history itself, nor how it could have historically eventuated. The question is why and how Confucianism is still alive and continuously reproduced even today, at this very moment, through every individual act and thought of Koreans, even after all those rumbling bandwagons of “modernization,” “globalization,” “market principles,” etc.

Episode 1: When “Game” Is Played by Koreans

In expounding on inherent ambiguities in getting clear-cut solutions in multiple equilibria-type game situations (in this text the “battle of sexes game”), the author, one of the best authorities in game theory,

remarks as follows.²

Once such a custom is established, it will likely persist. So perhaps the theory's lack of choice in this case is warranted; either "custom" is a possible outcome. Or to make a completely untested conjecture, perhaps the results of my casual experiment would be reversed if the subject population was a group of students from another culture in which deference to peers was conventional. Or imagine a subject population in which one participant was always, say, a Korean student and the second always a Korean professor; these identities being known to the participants. My limited experiences with Korean students lead me to conjecture rather confidently that the temporal order of moves will be almost completely disregarded and another rule will be used in its place (Kreps 1990, 102).

That is, were the Korean student and professor in play in the above (coordination-type) game, the "rule" is, confidently (to Kreps) to say, that the student always yields. Of course, deference to authority can be found in any society, especially between students and teachers. What, then, makes this renowned American economist so "confident" about such a deference emerging especially among, many possibilities, Korean students? It may be just coincidental, but millions of similar cases could be observed very easily, here and there, among Koreans.

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2. For those unfamiliar with game theory, let us briefly caricaturize the backbone of the "battle of sexes" game. Suppose there is a couple, "he" and "she." On a date, they could meet at either a "boxing" arena or a "ballet" theater. The problem is that each should go to one of the places without knowing to which place the other goes. They are both primarily concerned about meeting each other, and under that condition "he" prefers boxing and "she" prefers ballet. In the case that they are too altruistic (mutually yielding to the other's personal preference) or too egotistic, they will fail to meet. It is a coordination game, and there are multiple "solutions": going to the boxing arena together, going to the ballet theater together, etc. If repeated, there should emerge some rule ("custom" in Kreps' expression) among players to reduce the degree of uncertainty due to multiple solutions.

Episode 2: In the Subway

Inside a subway train, public notices above the corner seats read as follows: "Reserved for the elderly and disabled." Anything special with this? Well, maybe another trivial matter. Note that this is a public notice, and it is directly asking to yield to the elderly. Moreover, a recent television commercial advertised the following: Two innocent-looking boys are completely exhausted after playing street-basketball late at night. On their way home, inside a subway train, they are seen standing in front of an empty, but the so-called "reserved" seat. One says to the other "have a seat," and the other replies "Hey, aren't we still too young?"

What is the cultural message, or hidden text, of this advertisement? Is it just irrational to remain standing in front of an empty seat simply because one is "too young" even when there is no elderly person to yield to? Of course, this is an exaggeration and a beautified version of everyday practice. The fact is that you as a young person, especially a student, may get into some kind of trouble if you keep sitting in the "reserved" seat when an elderly person is in the vicinity. Maybe no direct admonishing is taking place, and the notice "Reserved for the elderly" is not legally binding; but you never fail to perceive that you are being regarded by most others there as "bad" or "ill-mannered," ignorant of the code of moral obligations (i.e., out of *ye-ui*). It is uncertain as to how many other countries have similar kinds of public notices, strongly backed by social norms, on their subway trains for the sake of the elderly. We are not talking about institutionalized social welfare such as reserved parking lots for the disabled, which are welfare facilities that may be better elaborated in many countries other than Korea. But, on a second thought, why is it with old age itself in Korea?

Form

In Korean, the word *ye-ui* or *yejeol*, or the expression *ye-ui bareuda*

(being in *ye-ui*), means “cultivated courtesy” with a strong sense of ethical correctness. *Ye-ui* refers mainly to the proper form one must articulate in dialogue and behavior in diverse social relationships, and in various interactions. A particular emphasis lies on the proper form of practice based on age and seniority differences between interacting agents. Roughly, most relationships dictated by Confucian authority relations are based on people’s ages. This is not to say that the age differential *per se* is the one deciding factor in Korean people’s lives, though it matters relatively more than in other countries. But in many cases, and especially in everyday life, a majority of the important criteria of power and prestige, or of “social distinction” (Bourdieu 1984) are closely related to the age differentials; seniority-based authority is the best example. True that the age-based authority is not idiosyncratic or unique only to Korean society. Japanese society also seems to have similar hierarchical relationships dependent on seniority differentials, and it likewise places, sometimes seemingly excessive, emphasis on formal courtesy in social relations. But, as it is argued here, Korea has somewhat distinctive characteristics operating in the mobilization and reproduction of the age-based Confucian authority relationships.

What is then the peculiar character of Korean Confucian authority? To begin with, I would like to examine the *modus operandi* of the concept “form” (*hyeong*, 形) and the logic of “internal truthfulness reveals itself as external proper form” (*seongeo jung hyeongeo oe*), in Confucianism. According to the *Daxue* (Great Learning),

There is no evil to which the petty man [*soin*], retired in his dwelling, will not proceed, but when he sees a superior man [*gunja*], he instantly tries to disguise himself, conceal his evil, and display his good. The others behold him, as if they see his heart and veins; of what use is his disguise? This is an instance of the saying—“What truly is within will be manifested without.” Therefore the superior man must be watchful over himself when he is alone (Legge [1893] 1971, 366-367).³

3. 小人閑居 爲不善無所不至 見君子而後 厭然掩其不善 而著其善。人之視己 如見其肺肝然 則可益矣。此

Formal, external propriety is extremely important in the Confucian world, since in principle, outward form must be completely in accord with inside virtue. Confucius himself was known to be obsessive about showing his outward formality, in matters of dress code, eating, and sleeping properly in different seasons and different occasions. His such concerns were not a matter of personal taste, as the following episode will demonstrate:

Episode 3: Confucius's Dialogue with Tselu (Zilu)

Confucius then had many disciples who were already in the government of Wei, and the ruler of Wei wanted to secure the services of Confucius. Tselu asked, "If the ruler of Wei should put you in power, how would you begin?" "I would begin with establishing a correct usage of terminology" (of ranks and titles), Confucius answered. "Do you really mean it?" asked Tselu. "How odd and impractical you are! What do you want to establish a correct terminology for?" "Ah Yu, you are simple-minded indeed!" Confucius replied. "If the terminology is not correct, then the whole style of one's speech falls out of form; if one's speech is not in form, then orders cannot be carried out; if orders are not carried out, then the proper forms of worship and social intercourse (in ritual and music) cannot be restored; if the proper forms of worship and social intercourse are not restored, then the legal justice in the country will fail; when legal justice fails, then the people are at a loss to know what to do or what not to do. When a gentleman institutes something, he is sure by what terminology it should be called, and when he gives an order, he knows that the order can be carried out without question. A gentleman never uses his terminology indiscriminately" (Lin 1938, 86-87).⁴

謂誠於中形於外 故君子必慎其獨也。 *Daxue* (The Great Learning).

4. 子路曰 衛君 待子而爲政 子將奚先, 子曰 必也正名乎, 子路曰 有是哉 子之迂也 奚基正, 子曰 野哉 由也. 君子於基所不知 蓋闕如也. 名不正即言不順 言不順即事不成 事不成即禮樂不興 禮樂不興即刑罰不中 刑罰不中即民無所措手足. 故君子名之必可言也 言之必可行也. 君子於基言無所苟而已矣. "Zilu," in *Lunyu* (Analects of Confucius).

We first consider the question of the source of the sacredness of the Confucian relationships. Why is daily practice, many times appearing just too natural and prevalent to be consciously conceived, based on Confucian authority rendered (even quasi-consciously or unconsciously) legitimate among Korean people? This is closely related to Weber's concept of the *Herrschaft*, the legitimate basis of authority, though the case of Korean Confucian authority does not quite fit into any of Weber's famous threefold typology (Weber 1968). This is not quite the issue of function or utility of Confucian authority, which is sometimes the (wrong) direction sought by some proponents (or defenders) of the younger generation for Confucian value in Korea. Nor is it quite the issue of morality or ideology, the discourse in which direction is often the position of both traditionalist or Marxist/feminist. It is rather the issue of *habitus*, the "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu 1977, 72). Or in other words, the dynamic and recursive relationships between the objective Confucian value system and our improvisational practices, both pivotal and trivial, and between the web of significance we ourselves spin and our orderly and artfully moving on in that space. As *habitus* it stands between the simultaneous reproductions of structure and action, of both *opus operatum* and *modus operandi*.

Episode 4: "Dare Not Smoke."

In Korea, one is not supposed to smoke in front of one's seniors, certainly not in front of one's parents, elderly relatives, and mostly not in front of one's boss and teachers. One is not even supposed to ask someone quite older for a match or a lighter on the street. One personal account tells of a Korean sociology professor: In the 1980s, *Mr. O* spent six years in an American university for his graduate study. Just some days before returning to Korea after finishing his Ph.D. degree, *Mr. O* and his adviser, an American professor, met at a beer party, and the adviser came to recognize for the first time that *Mr. O* had been a smoker, and was surprised how he didn't know that fact

for the past six years despite hundreds of encounters between them! *Mr. O* explained to his adviser that in Korea smoking in front of one's teacher is simply not done. *Mr. O* illustrated this case with another example. He said that once he was smoking outside the campus, and saw his adviser approaching him, upon which he immediately trod on his cigarette, which was an almost reflexive reaction without thought. How dare, in his point of view, a student show himself "smoking" in the face of his teacher! *Mr. O* was quite aware that he was in America, and his adviser, an American, wouldn't have cared at all about the scene of *Mr. O* smoking. His advisor probably wouldn't even understand why *Mr. O* trod on his cigarette. *Mr. O* told this author in retrospect his frightened reaction to hide his smoking scene to his American professor was ridiculous even to himself, but betraying such rational reasoning, he simply couldn't do it any other way. It was like a too old and too intimate habit to discard at a sudden moment. It was not his brain, but his body that insisted "it isn't done!"

Age- or seniority-differential *per se* is an element that constitutes a source of legitimacy for Korean Confucian authority, coming close to Weber's "traditional" type. But that's not the whole story. This is a place of a capitalist market economy, and the so-called "liberal democracy," and Korea surely does not deviate far from Weber's universal trend of "rationalization" (or "disenchantment"). What is the anachronism of the "traditional type" authority in a highly industrialized society? The question is what else, if any do, Korean people see in the hierarchical relations other than just quantitative differentials, when this differential *per se* acts as a potential source for both respect and envy, for both tutelage and repression, for both reverence and usurpation, and for both order and revolt. For example, in terms of distribution of material wealth, Korea belongs to a group of countries where the leveling tendency is quite strong and prevalent, with a relatively lower Gini coefficient, even after rapid economic growth. And for some historical reasons the wealthier class notoriously fail to earn the hegemonic (or moral) power but, on the contrary, is usually depicted as amoral parvenus among ordinary people. At least so far,

wealth, or the material hierarchy itself does not command authority in an authentic sense of hegemony in Korea, compared to other countries. Why, then, is another type of hierarchy, the age differential, rendered as so naturalized?

Sacredness

Philosophy deals with two distinct problems: value and reality—the sphere of the “ought” and the sphere of the “is.” This sharp distinction between “ought” and “is” is itself, to a considerable degree, the outcome of “modern” thought, which came with the emergence of social sciences in Europe after the eighteenth century. Confucianism, regardless whether in China or Korea, intermingles, even with obvious intention, the “ought” and the “is,” and tries to solve the problem of value, of what one ought to do, by solving (or comprehending) the problem of being, of what the reality is. Confucianism in its principle is metaphysics, ethics, and religion all at once, and this characteristic leads to what de Bary called the “trouble with Confucianism.” The ideal of the sage, the *gunja*, or the principle of “achieving saintly perfection through reasoning with the world” (*gungni seongseong*) is a typical dictum of Confucianism, and has been discussed on the premise of the fundamental intersection of two problematic areas, value and reality:

The successive movement of the inactive and active operation constitutes what is called the course (of things). That which ensues as the result (of their movement) is goodness; that which shows it in its completeness is the natures (of men and things). The benevolent see it and call it benevolence [*in*]. The wise see it and call it wisdom [*ji*]⁵ (Legge [1882] 1996, 355-356).

According to the quote above, we note that both benevolence (*in*),

5. 一陰一陽之謂道，繼之者善也，成之者性也。仁者見之謂之仁，知者見之謂之知。“Xicichuan—shang,” in *Zhouyi* (Book of Changes).

the value concept, and wisdom (*ji*), the concept of learning, refer to the same source, the fundamental truth of universe, the *dao* (*tao*).

Despite the diverse developments after the seventeenth century in the Joseon dynasty, the main stream discourse remained, until the collapse of Joseon at least, entrenched within the tradition of Neo-Confucianism,⁶ with even more austerity and orthodoxy than in China. In Korea, “Confucianism” or “Confucian culture” usually refers to Neo-Confucianism. If we search for the source of the sacred, then, at least in the Korean case, the place we look to should be where the Neo-Confucianism became anchored in Korea.

It is important to examine how the concept of *li*, the Principle as an operating law in nature, became logically transformed into an ethical rule normatively regulating individual deeds; in Confucian terms to say, how the Principle of “how nature is realized” (*soiyeon jiri*) come to be connected with the principle of “what rules to observe” (*sodangyeon jichik*). This is one of the key problems of Neo-Confucianism on which Masters Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao, and Zhu Xi had already articulated theories with a kernel of *seongjeungni* (the nature of mind being embedded within the Principle). Generally known as “One Principle at the same time itself being partitioned everywhere” (*liil bunsu*), this fundamental law provides the rationale that every man, in his mind, has a potential (or seed) of sacred nature, and therefore, in principle at least, can and must achieve the saintly state (*seong*, 聖).

Master Cheng said: What is bestowed from Heaven is called *myeong* (Mandate); Receiving it within myself is called *seong* (the nature of mind, 性); and what is revealed by it in things is called *li* (the Principle). *Li*, *seong*, *myeong*, all three have no difference among them.⁷

6. In 1289, a scholar-official of the Goryeo dynasty, An Hyang, brought with him from China a book entitled *Zhuzi quanshu* (Collected Works of Zhu Xi), which first introduced Neo-Confucianism to Korea.

7. 程子曰 天之付與之謂命，稟之在我之謂性，見於事物之謂理；理也，性也，命也，三者未嘗有異。 *Xingli daquan* (Encyclopedia of Neo-Confucian Thought), *juan*. 29; quoted from Yi (1995), p. 123.

Based on such an articulation on the relationship between the nature of mind (*seong*) and the Principle (*li*), however, founders of Joseon Confucianism focused more on the problem of how to establish and rationalize the derivation from that abstract principle of some ethico-behavioural principles into everyday social practices. Some major philosophical debates among leading scholars in sixteenth-century Joseon included the debates on self-enactment of the Principle (“*li* manifests itself” or *libal* vs. “*gi* manifests itself, and *li* rides on it” or *gibal liseung*), and the Four-Seven Debate (*sadan chiljeong non-jaeng*). These debates turned out to be very crucial in anchoring and shaping the Neo-Confucianism as the orthodox national ideology from the seventeenth century onward in Joseon, and all of which were related with the issue of ethical practices in everyday life rather than pure metaphysics. The following statement by sixteenth-century scholar-official Yi Eon-jeok (1491–1553) shows one typical example of such a concern:

For all from heaven to earth, there is neither anything which is not the flow (operation) of this *dao*, nor anything which is not the realization of it. When speaking from the viewpoint of the embedded *dao* in man, first to speak at a higher level, there is an ethical properness (*ryun*) for each of the relations between the lord and the subordinate, between father and son, between husband and wife, between the older and the younger; at a lower level, there is behavioral appropriateness (*jeol*) for each phase of moving and staying, acting forward and retreating backward, going upward and going downward; so the sincere appropriateness must reach to every one act of speaking, of remaining in a silence, of wearing a frown, and of smiling in one’s behavior. Everything in nature is equipped with its own principle of what is appropriate, and this principle cannot be partitioned or deviated. The reason of this comes indeed from the artful way of how “the principle” works.⁸

8. 凡天地在，無適而非此道之流行，無物而非此道之所體，基在人者，則大而君臣父子夫婦長幼之倫，小而動靜食息進退昇降之節，以至一言一默一嘆一笑之際，各有所當然而不可須離，亦不可毫釐差者，莫非此理之妙。 *Hoejae jeonso* (Complete Works of Hoejae Yi Eon-jeok), *gwon* 3; quoted from Hwang (1999), p. 170.

The same principle governing the natural world (or the unnamable universal law, the *dao*) produces both ethical relationships (*ryun*) and behavioral appropriateness (*jeol*), so that there must be all the proper forms in one's every behavior, and a proper time to speak and a time to be silent, as well as time to anger and time to smile.

It is well known that Confucian philosophy does not have a concept close to the European concept of "contract," which is conceived as something between autonomous "individuals." Actually there is no Cartesian "individual" at all in the Confucian world. Everything is "relational," and the proper form of these relations including ethical issues on social relationships should be under the governance of the same principle of the natural world. Therefore, the demand of ethical practices in one's everyday life must be rationalized by the same universal principles. Referring to Zhu Xi's logic, Yi Hwang (1501–1570), one of the most influential gurus of Joseon Neo-Confucianism, expressed this connection between the two worlds—the ethical principle (*sodangyeon*) of human beings and the principle of outer world (*soiyeon*);

Ships float on water and carts run on land; such is how the Principle (*li*) moves. Dragging a ship on land or a cart on water could not be the way that the Principle moves. Likewise as the Principle dictates, the prince (the super ordinate) ought to be humane, his minister (the subordinate) reverential, parents gracious, and children dutiful. If the prince is inhumane, the subordinate irreverent, parents ungracious, and children undutiful, then all these are contrary to the way that the Principle moves. The Principle is the reason that dictates how the entire world ought to behave; any deviation from or opposition to its dictated way cannot be called the Principle.⁹

That is, the reason a prince should be humane (*in*) toward his sub-

9. 夫舟當行水 車當行陸 此理也。舟而行陸 車而行水 則非其理也。君當仁 臣當敬 父當慈 子當孝 此理也。君而不仁 臣而不敬 父而不慈 子而不孝 則非其理也。凡天下所當行者理也 所不當行者非理也。 *Toegyeye jeonseo* (Collected Works of Toegye Yi Whang), *gwon* 5 (Seoul: Toegyehak Studies Institute, 1992); quoted from Hwang (1999), p. 194.

jects, and a child dutiful toward parents (*hyo*) is not just because those virtues are morally recommendable or proper in an aesthetic-moral sense, but because these are the correct properties naturally embedded in those specific relations. In Yi Hwang's words, "the ethical imperative" (*sodangyeon*) refers to humaneness of the prince and filial piety of children, and the nature's principle (*soiyeon*) refers to how humanness and filial piety are generated as naturally as a "ship on water" and a "cart on land."¹⁰ We note that unlike Christianity or Buddhism there are no creation myths in Confucianism; that is, human relationships within a hierarchy, as rulers like Emperors Yao or Shun on the one side and the governed people on the other, were regarded as a given without providing particular transcendental origins for them. This implies that the hierarchy in practical human relations itself contains the seed of sacredness. Neo-Confucianism of Joseon dynasty explicitly excavated this point, far more than the original formulation of Masters Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi, and established a strong ground for sanctifying everyday authority relations, whose result may be rendered as a sort of unintended consequence of otherwise pure academic debates.¹¹

Extension

The point is that in the Joseon Confucian world the hierarchical order in everyday social relationships was not just a matter of secular morality or interests, but got anchored by a source of sacredness in Confucian philosophy. This tendency provided a strong hegemonic power to the ruling *yangban* class (against both the king and com-

10. 皆所當然即君當仁子當孝之類，其所以然即所以仁所以孝者便是。 *Toegye jeonseo* (Collected Works of Toegye Yi Whang), *gwon* 5; quoted from Hwang (1999), p. 192.

11. This sixteenth-century formulation and justification of Confucian praxis had been subsequently and successfully propagated into every level mainly through mandatory education of (mostly middle-upper class) children using *Lesser Learning* and through the self-regulation system of (a Koreanized version of) Village Compact (*hyangyak*).

mon people) in forging both institutional and everyday politics. Even with some subtle but fundamental differences in philosophical positions,¹² Yi Hwang and other early sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers sought to sanctify (or justify such sanctification of) the *raison d'être* of mundane hierarchies.¹³ Thus, the social order of estate or class relationship became naturalized (and mythicized); the metaphysical concept of “division” (*bun*) in *liil bunsu* became social “division” in secular roles of authority and subordination.

Confucian social order has a tendency towards extension: from an intimate (familial) order to a social one, which is well expressed by the phrase “progressive emanation from being intimate in intimate relations to giving respects to the respectable in social relations, and finally to revering official state order” (*chinchin hyeonhyeon jonjon*). Let us consider how *ye* is related with the logic of *chinchin*.

Benevolence is the characteristic element of humanity, and the great exercise of it is in loving relatives. Righteousness is the accordance of actions with what is right, and the great exercise of it is in honoring the worthy. The decreasing measures of the love due to relatives [*chinchin jiswae*], and the steps in the honor due to the worthy [*jonhyeon jideung*], are produced by the principle of propriety (Legge [1893] 1971, 405-406).¹⁴

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12. One key issue involved in the possibility of self-enactment of the Principle, *libal* vs. *gibal liseung*, mainly between Yi Hwang and Yi I (1536–1584), two gurus of Joseon Confucianism from whom two main philosophical branches subsequently emerged.
 13. The time the two Yis and other early founders established Neo-Confucianism as the orthodox social philosophy of Joseon, largely through various academic debates, was characterized by several disastrous political events, the so-called “Four Persecutions” or “literati purges” (1498–1545), in which many Confucian scholars were executed by reactionary parties. Therefore, it was not just a coincidence that such political turmoil in the king’s court pushed out many talented scholars to forgo political ambitions and instead to indulge themselves in an ascetic attitude within an academic search for the true meaning of the human nature and the world.
 14. 仁者人也 親親爲大 義者宜也 尊賢爲大. 親親之殺 尊賢之等 禮所生也. *Zhongyong* (Book of the Doctrine of the Mean).

As Lin (1938) observed, “Confucius and Mencius literally said that, having acquired the habits of love and respect in the home, one could not but extend this mental attitude of love and respect to other people’s parents and elder brothers and to the authorities of the state.” Considering the revolutionary, prophetic tradition in Christianity, Weber (1951) once saw in this continuous gradation of *chinchin jonjon* of social order the fundamental conservative characteristic of Chinese Confucianism (thus with the result of ultimately failing to launch a rationalistic capitalism later) in which Confucians as gentlemen politically accommodated themselves to the status quo of the world they belonged to, in contrast to the criticizing and revolutionizing role of the Hebrew prophets. Whether Weber’s thesis is correct or not, we only note how the ethico-formality of *ye* is called forth to extend such social orders. We first briefly quote how the related concept, *jeol*, is formulated in such a formality matter of *ye*:

While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of Equilibrium [*jung*]. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of Harmony [*hwa*]. This Equilibrium is the great root from which grow all the human actings in the world, and this Harmony is the universal path which they all should pursue (Legge [1893] 1971, 384).¹⁵

Here we note that the concept of formal restraint, *jeol*, mediates between the personal virtue of modesty (“Equilibrium” in Legge’s translation) and the interpersonal virtue of Harmony. “Harmony” indicates some ideal state of interpersonal relations, and is achievable by proper formal restraint of natural feelings or interests in one’s relations with others. *Jeol* here can be interpreted as a value-laden normative force to be accompanied by ethical riteness, *ye*. In other words, *ye* is constituted of a properly constrained representation (*jeolmokhwa*) of the Principle, *li*, which also finds similar expression

15. 喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中 發而皆中節謂之和 中也者天下之大本 和也者天下之達道也。 *Ibid.*

in the well-known Confucian motto, “subdue one’s self and return to propriety” (*geukgi bongnye*) (Legge [1893] 1971, 250). So the formal ritual aspect of interpersonal relations is inherently equipped with a normative force, and it is called the normatively restrained ethical formality, *yejeol*. The well-known five cardinal ethics are conceived as more specific expressions of this logic of *yejeol*.¹⁶ These five principles constitute the kernel of *Xiaoxue* (The Lesser Learning), which was regarded as the first universal lesson for all would-be cultivated men, and was successively propagated throughout the whole country by the fervent efforts of gentrified Confucians (most notably by Yi I) in Joseon dynasty.

However, in the above mentioned social logic of *chinchin jonjon*, we see a certain degree of inherent relativity or flexibility in this normative principle; the proper form varies depending on different situations. This contrasts with the absolute ethical order found in the monotheistic tradition of Christianity. Even though the formal aspect of human (hierarchical) relations contains in itself some seed of sacredness, as mentioned before, this relative character (i.e., situational logic) of *ye* makes its realization in practice fundamentally arbitrary, leaving plenty of room for ideational and strategic maneuvering. In as much as the source of sacredness comes from varying metaphysical articulations, this system of sacredness becomes basically unstable, easily losing its authentic meaning for some backdoor compromise in everyday politics. This is, in a sense, an inevitable result for the semireligious, semiphilosophical system of Confucianism.

Turnstile

In Korea today, not many of the younger generation know the names

16. There are ethically proper forms guiding the five different phases of one’s life and relation to others, but five are basically applied in the same spirit; “intimacy” between parents and child (*buja yuchin*), “righteousness” between leader (or king) and subordinates (*gunsin yuu*), “moral division” between husband and wife (*bubu yubyeol*), “orderliness by rank” between elder and younger (*jangyu yuseo*) and “trustworthiness” among peers or colleagues (*bungu yusin*).

of the Four Books, let alone the specific teachings of Zhu Xi or Yi Hwang. They are just “museum pieces” left in a forgotten corner, and few would trouble themselves to go take a glance. But the spirit of Confucianism, if not its explicit pedagogic content, is still alive all over contemporary Korean society. Like a revolving turnstile, Confucian ideational justification for social hierarchy continues alternating between revealing the sacred and returning back to the profane, in a game subscribing to the logic of the ideational interests as well as of the material ones. Even though people no longer consciously believe in the sacredness of this hierarchy, especially the one based on age, it still cannot be assumed that authority relationships are just a matter of sheer power differentials. By “power” I am referring to whatever capacity one has to control others through controlling vested social resources. It is not quite “sacred” in a genuine sense, but neither is it a mere gradation in continuum; there is some qualitative discontinuity or a rupture in the power scale in the working rationale of revering (or appearing to revere) one’s elders or seniors for the sake of age differential itself. It is argued here that the discontinuity is grounded in those Confucian principles culturally and historically indoctrinated as a hidden agenda. Even though few contemporary Koreans acknowledge any explicit sacredness to be laden in everyday Confucian hierarchies, nonetheless they are all affected by the existence of some ineffable mystic aura of something sacred in its practice. Further, being aware of the fact that everyone is affected by it, people maneuver relationships in an artful and strategic way toward their ideational and material interests as well. The same mundane hierarchy is at the same time the source of the sacred and the profane, as in Durkheim (Durkheim [1915] 1965). As a constantly revolving turnstile, the same practical human relations present alternatively the sacred and the profane, *gunja* “sage” and *soin* “petty man,” and the *ye* and the anti-*ye*. The following examples are illustrative of how this works in everyday moral politics in contemporary Korea.

Password

The Korean language has very strict and complex rules of conjugational changes and usage of appellation terms for distinguishing between common and honorific cases (*banmal* vs. *jondaemal*). Even though similar features may be commonly found for most languages, the degree of complexity of this linguistic rule in Korean is overwhelming. For example, if one uses *banmal* to someone unfamiliar as well as someone older, it is obviously taken as an insult. One might get into a fierce argument or even a scuffle for the sake of using the incorrect conjugation or dropping the honorific form. It has even been said that Korean society will never be “democratic” in a Western sense because of these strictly hierarchical linguistic structures that render everyday practices fundamentally authoritarian. The point is, linguistic usage matters, and it matters dearly in Korea. One reason that linguistic usage of terms and conjugations matter to such an extent can be found in the fact that using *banmal* to someone means automatically exercising full authority, formal and informal over that person. Allowing *banmal* is almost equal to acknowledging control or full authority from the other party. By the term “full authority,” it is close to meaning the same kind of authority working in the field of familial intimacy, like *chinchin*, between the two involved; and note the fact that being “big brother” or “father” means much in Korea in the literal sense of “the orderliness by rank between the elder and the younger” (*jangyu yuseo*). Usage of the Korean term *hyeong* (兄), originally a familial appellation for elder brother, is a representative example. When you call somebody in the senior position *hyeong* in a formal organizational setting, it usually signals that you two are in an intimate protector-protégé relationship, like an elder and younger brother relationship within a family.¹⁷ It is

17. One reviewer points out that this analysis may be less appropriate among women, and likely be subjected to feminist criticism. The Confucian value system itself is largely antifeminist, in which women are categorized as “social inferiors.” Since the emphasis of this paper is on the characterization of strategic moves in power relations regardless of sexual categories, I admit that my description may not apply

more than just a formal role-based authority; as a *hyeong* the senior could ask his junior for a personal favor beyond the supposedly “correct” range of formal bound. Then, what is the counter payoff for the subordinate? Again like in *chinchin*, the other side of the senior’s “full authority” is his widely ranging responsibility over, and taking intimate care of, the welfare of his subordinate. For example, in Korea, it is usually the case, albeit an implicitly agreed one, and one of proper *ye*, that the senior pays all the bill when eating or drinking together.

The game starts like this: assume there are two persons, *H*, a senior or older person, and *L*, a junior or younger person in a situation where they regularly encounter each other. At first, being unfamiliar with each other, they use mutual honorific terms (*jondaemal*) and formal appellations with one another. As time goes by, subtle changes emerge in their relationship, either out of materialistic interests or out of some uneasy feeling. They both face a moment of qualitative change in their relationship, from a formal role-based one to a kind of the *hyeong*-based one. At this juncture, the strategically critical issue comes whether or not to change the appellation term and use *banmal*. The “lesser,” *L*, can initiate this rite of passage by saying “why don’t you tone down to me from this moment, please?” which sends a signal that he, *L*, now wants to get into the protector-protégé relationship with *H*. The “largest” *H*, then, may reply like “Well, could I? O.K.!” initiating the two into a familial, full authority relationship. Upon this change of terms, the whole meaning of the relationship changes in a drastic manner; a wider range of authority is allowed and special favors are granted between the two. They are now like blood brothers. This rite does not always end like this, however. *H* may in an euphorical way reject *L*’s offer and continue to use *jondaemal*. *H*’s insistence on using *jondaemal* even after *L*’s request

to women. Also, even if we are talking about hierarchical relations, we indicate that the changing nature of relationship due to linguistic usage change is applicable among “equals” as well, with a caveat that in this case the extension of authority is mutual, not unidirectional.

of *banmal* may embarrass, frustrate or even anger *L*. Since this might signify that the senior does not yet consider the relationship to be appropriate, profitable, or worthy enough to regard as intimate.

On the other hand, *H*, the senior, for specific interests or for the sake of more authoritative control, may initiate this rite by saying "I can tone down to you, can't I?" to *L*. And if *L* agrees, then the two are initiated into the above protector-protégé relationship. Usually such an initial offer from the senior is more insisting and harder to reject in a forthright way. Blatant rejection of senior's wish is not recommended in Korea, since such form usually deviates from the proper *ye*. So, if *L* doesn't want to change the current state of their relationship, there are many subtle and indirect ways to reject *H*'s offer; by expressing words of rejection in a polite and roundabout way, by deferring an immediate answer or making it just ambiguous, or by making no answer and turning the issue. The junior may circumvent the situation by avoiding *H*, if possible. At this time, the senior gets upset since *H* well knows what *L*'s unwillingness to change linguistic terms signifies; *L* sends a signal to *H* that *L* wants their authority relation to remain within the formal, superficial and definite boundaries; that is, *L* does not consider *H* worthy to be allowed to reign over him. Sometimes, the senior pays dearly for his presumptuous offer as illustrated by the following episode:

Episode 5: "You're My Seonbae!"

In Korea, the alumni network, *hagyeon*, especially at the high-school level, is one of the most powerful bases for forming "strong ties," a source of ingroup-outgroup distinction and ingroup favoritism. It is one of a few quintessential *modus operandi* that shapes and modifies current Korean society. So it would be easily conceivable to locate the meaning of high-school *seonbae* (the senior man among alumni) in Korean society.

Mr. Noh is a 37-year-old top executive member of a big entertainment company in Korea. One day *Mr. Noh* contacted *Mr. X* for a business venture; he was considering giving a subcontract to *Mr. X*

amongst other possible competitors. While negotiating the deal, they talked casually and happened to the topic of high school:

Mr. Noh: How do you know *K*? Have you ever met him?

Mr. X: Well, Mr., I've met him a couple of times before, and in fact we graduated from the same high school. I am his *seonbae*. Do you know him?

Mr. Noh: He is my friend and we were high-school classmates. Oh my, then you are my *seonbae*?

Mr. X: Oh, really? What a pleasant surprise! Imagine meeting a high-school *hubae* (junior) like this!

From the moment they recognize their senior-junior (*seonhubae*) relationship, their relationship undergoes a subtle but drastic change, a reversing of order, from the one of subcontract grantor and petitioner into the supposedly intimate but authoritative one of school network. Surely, this kind of situation would be the last one *Mr. Noh*, as a subcontract giver, wants to find himself in. On the other hand, *Mr. X* never failed to grasp the newly emerged meaning of their relationship, and tries to quickly exploit it to turn the negotiation table around to his favor. Embarrassed by the conflation of business and high-school matters, of the official and the personal, *Mr. Noh* ended up forgoing the deal (of course, in a very roundabout way). Even after this specific occasion, from time to time, *Mr. X* tried to invite *Mr. Noh* out for a casual luncheon meeting as his high-school senior. However, out of a burdensome feeling, *Mr. Noh* simply ran away from him by avoiding calls, making excuses, and so on. Their relationship is now virtually terminated, very much against the interests of *Mr. X* who had other business interests with *Mr. Noh*'s company.

Question around the offer and counter offer of "toning down terms" involves very subtle and strategic considerations regarding timing. A junior might blush when approached in *banmal* by a senior without his consent, or embarrassed when, despite his permission, the senior continues to speak in *jondaemal*. Living in Korea, one better understand correctly what is really signified by this signifier, the form of wording, *bannal* and *jondaemal*. In this game of wording, of

linguistic “riteness,” it is crucial to perceive the proper time to offer, to insist, to anticipate the other so as not to reject the change of linguistic terms, which plays a role of “password,” opening and closing hierarchical social relationships with different implications for the proper and legitimate authority to be yielded. People become trapped in, and many times can feel simply burdened and uncomfortable with the strictly divided dual structure of Korean language. But within that “prison-house of language” (Jameson 1972), people can actively accommodate and manipulate their social relations, especially hierarchical ones, to benefit their interests by strategically playing within this dual linguistic form; a relation of *habitus*, in a nutshell.

Signalling

The term “*ye-ui bareum*” (being in proper ethical form in one’s relationships), has been one of the key criteria of evaluation of individual in Korea. Expressing the proper form of respect toward significant authorities is of utmost importance in one’s social activity. Many times the degree of one’s social achievement is directly dependent on *ye-ui*, and often times more important than even one’s individual ability. Koreans tend to think that Korea is the country of *ye-ui*, as like the self-claimed euphoria of “nation of *ye*” (*dongbang ye-ui jiguk*), but this is more like a contemporary myth Koreans have arbitrarily created, even though it looks true in outer appearance that Koreans are much concerned about the form-related proprieties. Then what is going on underneath the seemingly innocent term “*ye-ui bareum*”?

Propriety of relationships is a fundamental issue linked in complex way with historical, cultural, ideological and sociopolitical factors in Korea; we provide one provisional account of the political economic explanation of it here. The matter of *ye-ui* as currently shaped, we argue, is closely related to distributional aspect of social resources in the historical experience of contemporary Korea. Besides Confucianism, which provides the ideological mantle, there are three his-

torical factors in modern era which have shaped the formulation of the ye politics in Korea¹⁸: Japanese colonization of Korea (1910–1845), the Korean War (1950–1953), and the so-called “developmental state” of Park Chung-hee (1961–1979). Referring to Lee (1999, 2000) for more detailed explanations, we hereby briefly indicate three significant results from those historical experiences: Japanese colonialism led to the sudden breakdown of the traditional class system; the Korean War brought about an authoritarian atmosphere and intense confrontation of ideologies; and Park Chung-hee’s regime brought about a state-centered developmental strategy with a strong top-down mobilization of civil society. On the objective side, Park’s bureaucratic authoritarian regime in particular, with its arbitrary but willful power, brought about “free-floating” resources, accompanied by institutional “slack” in officially checking their manipulation. On the other hand, on the agent’s side, people were struck with a strong incentive to capture those free-floating resources, i.e., “rent-seeking.” This individual incentive to align with the powerful central authority could become stronger because the class system, which had collapsed under colonialism, had underwent a rapid restructuring process that left a relatively large space for individual upward social mobility. This kind of arbitrary mobilization of social resources has both its positive and negative influences on developmental efficiency. It could be efficient in the short term, especially at the economic “take-off” stage, but could become inefficient in the longer term.¹⁹

The significant point of the arbitrariness of objective resource distribution and of the prevalence of rent-seeking, for our concern of

18. As one reviewer indicates, there is no doubt that current authoritarian hue of interpersonal relations has been greatly affected by Japanese colonialism and the so-called “barrack culture” propagated by subsequent military regimes. I am not saying that Confucian culture is the major or the most important factor in explaining the current authoritarian nature. It is rather like a “chip” or a “mantle” press with which Japanese colonialists and military rulers (of both South and North Korea) exploited for their own political purposes. Sheer force could hardly achieve its political aim without mobilizing effectively the extant of the value these chips, even if they are just some debris.

19. See Lee (1999) for more details about this nonlinear effect of mobilization strategy.

ye politics, is that one's market capacity, i.e., his individual productivity, becomes relatively demoted in its relation to becoming the "winner" as far as there lacks an exact matching mechanism equating one's ability to its social reward (or in economics terms, equalization of "productivity" and "wage"). Simply, there remains too much room for arbitrariness in the control of significant social resources for each individual not to invest in rent-seeking kinds of social relationship: Note that this is an individual rational choice for each actor, though it would produce quite perverted effects for society in the longer term. So, if the term *ye-ui bareum* (being on ye) can be interpreted as the general dispositional orientation of proper reverence toward hierarchical authorities around oneself, then the reputation of one's *ye-ui bareum* can be rendered to signify the degree that one could accommodate oneself, especially on future occasions, properly in general to any possible arbitrary demand by the above authority (either a concrete person in an upper position or a "collectivistic" logic itself).

It is to be noted that this practice of *ye-ui*, as a kind of signal, has an intrinsic rational logic. When there lacks an exact criterion of evaluation about individuals, or when there lacks even the demand itself of the exact criterion (due to overall arbitrariness in resource distribution) then how can we select the "winner"? This situation can be defined as "information asymmetry," as modeled in information economics, whereby the "true type" (or hidden ability) of an agent on one side cannot be directly revealed to the transacting party on the other side.²⁰ In general, information asymmetry condition leads to the shrinkage or even collapse of markets (Akerlof 1970; Rothschild and Stiglitz 1976), culminating in a sub-optimal equilibrium. In this

20. As a typical example, an insurance company wants to know which customer is more reckless; employers want to know who would be better at the task among undistinguishable candidates. Recklessness of customers or ability of workers are the information (true type) which the other party, insurance company and employer here, wants to know but is hidden. This information is "asymmetric" between two involved parties, since the customer and the employee, know better what type they are.

overall uncertainty, some devices are created to make the separation among hidden “types” possible (i.e., the so-called “separating equilibrium”), either from the target agents revealing their “true type” (“signaling”), or from the selecting agents to sort out the targets’ types (“screening”). Both devices, however, inherently contain some degree of sub-optimality. In the context of the discussion of *ye*, the problem is how one, as a target agent in the above “asymmetry” situation, could reveal his “true” type. That is, how does one make known the fact that he is not the deviant type of person, and he would heed with every possible concerns for and never deviate from others’ (or collective) demands. By showing that one is able to adhere as closely as possible to the demanded rules of society, however minute and trivial they may be, one may indirectly reveal his “true” type in a public way, making himself thus appear deserving of some serious consideration as a candidate for more important roles in the future. Keeping to those current mundane forms and minute etiquettes, his being on “*ye-ui bareum*” can be rendered as actually sending a loud signal to the public about his general disposition, and his ability to behave properly, of giving proper notice to their demands, as a man “with a keen sense of responsibility toward one’s fellow men and the general social order”(Lin 1938); that is, his being as man of cultivated concerns toward the arbitrariness of the world.

Phantom

As a *habitus*, the meaning and practice of *ye* is both reproduced and transformed through numerous local practices of all individuals. *Ye* is just like our “body”; it is embedded within Korean consciousness as a “virtue made of necessity”: “One could endlessly enumerate the values given body, made body, by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy which can instill a whole cosmology, through injunctions as insignificant as “sit up straight” or “don’t hold your knife in your left hand,” and inscribe the most fundamental principles of the arbitrary content of a culture in seemingly innocuous

details of bearing or physical and verbal manners, so putting them beyond the reach of consciousness and explicit statement" (Bourdieu 1990, 79). Market principle, promulgation of individualism, amounting demand for more transparency—all these affect the direction of the meaning of the everyday politics of *ye*, and the meaning of Confucianism in Korea. On the other hand, however, *ye* politics would shape those political economic aspects of society in a significantly different way than other, especially non-Confucian countries. Whatever the future brings, the important point is that Koreans live Confucianism, somewhat quasi-consciously, without any need to understand it. Certainly, thinking consciously about it and trying to analyze it here, I too cannot but confess that the Confucian "phantom which is imprudently summoned up, in the hope of exorcising it for good, vanishes only to reappear, and closer than one imagines to the place where it was at first."

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GLOSSARY

<i>banmal</i>	(盤語)	<i>chinchin hyeon-</i>	親親賢賢
<i>birye</i>	非禮	<i>hyeon</i>	
<i>bubu yubyeol</i>	夫婦有別	<i>chinchin jonjon</i>	親親尊尊
<i>buja yuchin</i>	父子有親	<i>chinchin jiswae</i>	親親之殺
<i>bun</i>	分	<i>dao</i> (Ch.)	道
<i>bungu yusin</i>	朋友有信	<i>Daxue</i> (Ch.)	大學
Cheng Hao (Ch.)	程顥	<i>dongbang ye-ui jiguk</i>	東方禮儀之國
Cheng Yi (Ch.)	程頤	<i>geukgi bongnye</i>	克己復禮
<i>chinchin</i>	親親	<i>gibal liseung</i>	氣發理乘

<i>gungni seongseong</i>	窮理成聖	<i>seonbae</i>	先輩
<i>gunja</i>	君子	<i>seong</i>	性
<i>gunsin yuui</i>	君臣有義	<i>seong</i>	聖
<i>hagyeon</i>	學緣	<i>seongeo jung</i>	誠於中
<i>Hoeje jeonseo</i>	晦齊全書	<i>hyeongeo oe</i>	形於外
<i>hubae</i>	後輩	<i>seongjeungni</i>	性即理
<i>hwa</i>	和	<i>Seongnihak</i>	性理學
<i>hyangyak</i>	鄉約	<i>seonhubae</i>	先後輩
<i>hyeong</i>	兄	<i>Shun (Ch.)</i>	舜
<i>hyeong</i>	形	<i>sodangyeon</i>	所當然
<i>hyo</i>	孝	<i>sodangyeon jichik</i>	所當然之則
<i>libal</i>	理發	<i>soin</i>	小人
<i>liil bunsu</i>	理一分殊	<i>soiyeon</i>	所以然
<i>in</i>	仁	<i>soiyeonjiri</i>	所以然之理
<i>jangyu yuseo</i>	長幼有序	<i>Toegye jeonseo</i>	退溪全書
<i>jeol</i>	節	<i>Yao (Ch.)</i>	堯
<i>jeolmokhwa</i>	節目化	<i>ye</i>	禮
<i>ji</i>	知	<i>yejeol</i>	禮節
<i>jondaemal</i>	(尊待語)	<i>ye-ui</i>	禮儀
<i>jonhyeon jideung</i>	尊賢之等	<i>ye-io bareuda</i>	禮儀
<i>jung</i>	中	<i>ye-ui bareum</i>	禮儀
<i>li</i>	理	<i>Xiaoxue (Ch.)</i>	小學
<i>Lunyu (Ch.)</i>	論語	<i>Xingli daquan (Ch.)</i>	性理大全
<i>mun</i>	文	<i>Zhongyong (Ch.)</i>	中庸
<i>myeong</i>	命	<i>Zhuzi quanshu (Ch.)</i>	朱子全書
<i>oryun</i>	五倫	<i>Zhu Xi (Ch.)</i>	朱熹
<i>ryun</i>	倫	<i>Zilu (Ch.)</i>	子路
<i>sadaebu</i>	士大夫		
<i>sadan chiljeong</i>	四端七情		
<i>nonjaeng</i>	論諍		

(Ch.: Chinese)