Virtue of the Mean (Jung-yong) and the Vision for Restoring Human Ethics - Part 9

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A portrait of Zhu Xi (1130 - 1200), a Confucian scholar of the Song Dynasty in China, widely known by the honorific title "Zhu Zi" (Master Zhu). He established the "Four Books" system by separating the Great Learning (Daxue) and the Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong) - which were originally parts of the Book of Rites - and placing them alongside the Analects (Lunyu) and Mencius (Mengzi). Zhu Xi established the academic transmission system of Confucian sages, dictating that in the course of study, one must read the Great Learning first, followed by the Analects, Mencius, and finally the Doctrine of the Mean

[Limits of Paternal Civilization, Vision of Maternal Salvation - Contribution]

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Maternal Devotion and the Aesthetics of Si-jung Healing an Age of Imbalance

In 21st-century modern society, which enjoys high-tech progress and material abundance, humanity paradoxically faces a crisis of severe spiritual imbalance and fragmented relationships. The core Confucian value summoned to overcome this contemporary impasse is "Jung-yong" (中庸, the Doctrine of the Mean). Jung-yong does not simply mean a mechanical midpoint or an arithmetical average. It is a dynamic spiritual struggle to maintain moral equilibrium amidst an ever-changing reality, as well as a grand philosophical project to harmonize human order with the order of the cosmos.

Zhu Xi, a Confucian scholar of the Song Dynasty, systematized the philosophy of the Doctrine of the Mean into a moral metaphysics centered on sincerity (Seong / 誠), establishing it as a philosophy that penetrates internal self-cultivation and cosmic order as one. If human civilization has thus far developed through a paternal-centered logic emphasizing vertical order and justice, we have now reached a critical moment where maternal harmony - which embraces and enfolds all creation - is desperately needed to complement those limits.

The Metaphysical Foundation of Jung-yong: Heavenly Decree (Cheon-myeong) and the Restoration of Original Nature

The Doctrine of the Mean opens with the declaration: "What Heaven commands is called human nature (性); following this nature is called the Way (道); cultivating the Way is called education/instruction (教)." This implies that human nature is a moral entity bestowed by Heavenly Parent, suggesting that human life itself is a process of realizing Heaven's will on earth.

The character "Jung" (中, Mean/Center) in Jung-yong refers to a state of being unbiased and uninclined (Bul-pyeon-bul-ui / 不偏不倚), while "Yong" (庸, Ordinary/Constant) denotes the unchanging daily constancy (Pyeong-sang-seong / 平常性). In other words, Jung-yong is the process of internalizing Heavenly Law and consistently practicing moral principles in daily life. From this perspective, restoring one's original nature means regaining cosmic balance, aiming toward a state where paternal order and maternal love achieve complete equilibrium.

The Driving Force of Sincerity (Seong): Maternal Heart Born of Utmost Devotion

The most fundamental principle running through the entire Doctrine of the Mean is "Seong" (誠) - sincerity and devotion. In Confucianism, Seong is Heavenly Law that transforms and completes all creation, as well as the ultimate personal standard toward which human beings must strive. In particular, the teaching of "Chi-gok" (致曲) emphasized in Chapter 23 - that "by devoting one's utmost sincerity to

even the smallest matters, one can transform the world" - is deeply linked to the essence of the maternal heart (Shimjeong).

A mother's maternal heart, pouring devotion into every small detail of her child's daily life, is the concrete manifestation of utmost sincerity (Ji-seong / 至誠). Such sincere love does not remain merely in the realm of emotion; it shapes a person's character and becomes the foundational driving force that transforms society as a whole. Devotion is not passive self-cultivation, but a practical philosophy of action that inspires moving grace in all relationships. Only when this principle of maternal Seong is added to the framework of law and justice established by paternal civilization can civilization gain complete vitality and reach fulfillment.

Central Harmony (Jung-hwa) and Timely Mean (Si-jung): The Right Positioning of Emotion and the Aesthetics of Circumstance

Jung-yong does not seek the suppression of human emotions, but rather their harmonious expression, known as "Jung-hwa" (中和, Central Harmony). The tranquil, original state before the emotions of joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure arise is called "Jung", and when emotions arise in proper measure and harmony, it is called "Hwa". A mother who feels anger at her child's wrongdoing while never losing the underlying love is the most universal example of achieving Jung-hwa - "expressing anger without losing ethics."

Furthermore, the most vital aspect in practicing Jung-yong is "Si-jung" (時中, Timely Mean). This means not rigidly holding on to fixed principles, but exercising the wisdom to make the most appropriate and optimal choice within the concrete context of "here and now." Just as a parent's role must adapt flexibly depending on the child's stage of development and situation, the Jung-yong of a noble person (Jun-zi) takes as its core the aesthetics of Si-jung - acting appropriately according to the time. Human history has now passed the era of paternal struggle and arrived at the pivotal moment of Si-jung, where maternal embrace is urgently required.

The Appearance of the Only Begotten Daughter as the Fulfillment of Jung-yong

Ultimately, Jung-yong is not staying in a state of quietude, but a courageous practice of keeping one's center and moving forward in an ever-changing world. The utmost devotion and timely care represented by the maternal heart serve as a powerful alternative to heal the selfishness and imbalances of modern society. When the heart of Chi-gok (devoting sincerity to small things) and the virtue of Jung-hwa (achieving emotional harmony) spread throughout society, we will welcome a world of Great Unity (Dae-dong / 大同), where every individual finds their rightful place and embraces one another.

If civilization up to this point has been a paternal-centered order tilted to one side, the appearance of a maternal reality to restore that balance is now providential. Opening the Era of the Substantial Realm of Later Heaven (Hucheon-gaebyyeok) of embrace and harmony to end the era of struggle and division, the advent of the Only Begotten Daughter is the most majestic event in history, realizing the Way of Si-jung to save humanity in accordance with providential time. Through this substantial fulfillment of Jung-yong, humanity must now welcome a new civilization of harmonized paternal and maternal essence: the era of Cheon Il Guk (天一國).