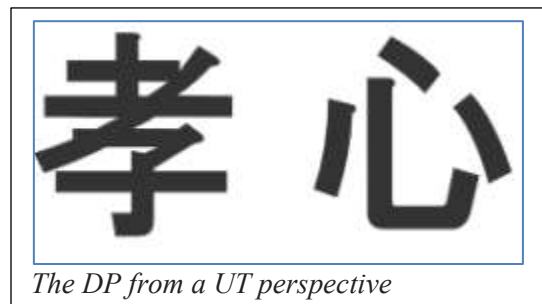


Chinese Character Explains Family Ethics

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The Second Blessing, part 7

In the last article, we'd examined an ordered structure which underlies everything in the created world. As the two diagrams we'd presented illustrate, there is a "vertical" relationship between satellite heavenly bodies and their parent bodies; and there is a "horizontal" relationship between satellites having the same parent body.

And those relationships originate with God's design for human beings and especially their families. So the natural laws which govern the family of a solar system parallel the ethical and moral laws which govern a human family.

As quoted last week, *"ethics is the norm which family members observe toward one another as connected beings."* (NEUT, p. 284) Looking at the vertical relationships first — that is, those between elders and their juniors — there are two directions in the relationship: the "downward" flow of heart from the elders, and the "upward" flow of heart from the children. And the character of these flows are expressed through specific virtues. Unification Thought's Axiology (study of value) explains:

"Corresponding to the vertical order of the family, vertical values come to be established. In the family the parents show benevolence to the children, and the children practice filial piety toward the parents. These are vertical values on the family level. When these values are applied to society and the nation, various kinds of vertical values can be derived. Clemency and good governance by the ruler toward the people; loyalty of the people toward their ruler; the teacher's duty to their students; respect and obedience of students toward their teachers; protection of the junior by the senior; respect of the junior for the senior; the authority of superiors over their subordinates; the obedience of subordinates to their superiors; and so on." • *New Essentials of Unification Thought*, p. 228

You can see the correspondence between vertical order and virtues in the following figure:



The important thing to remember is that these virtues are the way that we express our heart to the members of our own family. The primary form of downward love is benevolence. When you look up the etymology of the word, you'll discover that it comes from the Latin *benevolentia* "good feeling, good will, kindness," from *bene* "well" + *volentem* (nominative *volens*) present participle of *velle* "to wish" (see *will* (v.)) www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=benevolence).

Understanding more through Chinese characters

And if you look up the Chinese character (仁愛) and its meaning, the first character means "humane" and the second character means "to love / affection / to be fond of" (www.mdbg.net/chindict/chindict.php?page=worddict&wdrst=1&wdqb=benevolence)

The primary form of upward love is filial piety (and loyalty). The Chinese character for the filial piety is 孝 and it is in turn made of two characters. The one on top represents the parent; the one underneath represents the child. That arrangement of characters suggests a strong healthy child bearing their elderly parent on their back. It can also be written as 孝心. That second character means “heart” and that is meant to tell you that the feeling is not only a duty, but that it comes from within the child’s sincere heart.

By the way, I was amused to discover what the Chinese character for “patience” meant. Patience as you can see from the figure is one of the virtues that express the parents’ love for their children. Well, the Chinese character is 忍 and it’s made from two characters. The one on the bottom is a heart. And the one on the top is a knife. So “patience” is depicted as a heart with a knife in it — ouch!

In any case, the upper block of virtues gives us some expressions of parents’ love for their child, and the lower block of virtues gives expressions of love from the child to their parents. Unification Thought then explains that these virtues can be practiced through manners, customs and duties that parents and children show to one another:

“The education of ... standards of conduct starts at home, practically as soon as a child is born. A child must be taught certain manners and customs, first at home, then both at home and in school. When a man fully understands and practices the principled duty of a man, and a woman fully understands and practices the principled duty of a woman, the education of norm has been completed.” - Explaining UT, p. 225

New Culture Combines the Best from All

There are certain manners and customs that we can pick up from Korean culture, certainly. The difference in language used when addressing elders, peers, and juniors is one that easily comes to mind. Those special words definitely reinforce our awareness of our vertical position to a family member. But they also allow us to express strong affection without the risk of misinterpreting the meaning!

But since Unification Thought (in its Theory of Art) explains that the new culture will be created by combining the very best elements of our own various cultures and national backgrounds (see quote below), I believe that if any of us — regardless of our continent of racial/national origin — look back a generation or so, we’ll discover that there are indeed certain manners and customs (in language and gestures) and perhaps duties that serve as reminders of our position in the family’s vertical order.

“...culture will be formed through a universal spirituality and expression of art on a higher dimension, while at the same time preserving the essences of different national cultures, each with its own individuality.” - New Essentials of UT, p. 325

So next time you find yourself relating to your parent, grandparent or aunt and uncle, or the next time you relate to your son, daughter or niece or nephew, I hope that you can remember that there are probably virtues that can help make your expression of love clearer, stronger and more beautiful.