



Korean Social Emotions: *Han* (한恨), *Heung* (흥興), and *Jeong* (정情)

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to actualize a digitally extended society without physical contact. It has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to the ongoing phenomenon of social distancing norms and nearly worldwide lockdowns. People and organizations—including religious and academic ones—all over the world have had to adjust to new ways of living. The digital network has become a main means to maintain many aspects of global society and economy. The digitalization of educational institutions is leading teachers and students to work from home rather than classrooms. For now, human civilization has transformed itself from an in-person contact society to a digitally extended society. This transition to the networked world of human relations can cause a polarization of sensibility and sensitivity that might lead to people's lack of compassion (human-heartedness) or *jeong/qing* (정情; emotional affection/bond/relationship). Thus, the recovery of these kinds of

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social emotions through universal sympathy is urgently needed in our semiocapitalist society.

This chapter deals with the Korean social emotions of *han* (한/恨; resentment, suffering), *jeong* (정/情), *musim* (무심 無心; non-attachment, no heart-mind), and *heung* (흥/興; exhilaration, utmost joy). The Korean dynamics via the coupling of *heung* and *han*, of *musim* and *jeong* is called *pungnyu* (also spelled *poong-ryu*; 풍류/風流), which is the Korean aesthetic enjoyment of the flow of life and nature. The argument is that emotions are social interface to exchange personal feelings with others so that people and things correspond to each other (*gamjeong* 감정/感應). *Pungnyu* may be a stabilizer to balance emotional instability in the contemporary world.

8.2 EMOTIONS IN THE KOREAN CONFUCIAN TRADITION

Emotion or feeling is difficult to define, given that its definition can vary from culture to culture. In Northeast Asian countries, the keyword for emotions/feelings would be *jeong/qing* (情) or *gamjeong* (感情), but the English word “emotions” cannot fully capture the flexible meaning of Korean *jeong*. The Chinese character *jeong/qing* (情) means emotions/feelings in general; however, in the Korean cultural context, it also has another dimension of meaning. The Korean postcolonial theologian Wonhee Joh describes *jeong* as “a Korean way of conceiving a complex constellation of relationality of the self with the other that is deeply associated with compassion, love, vulnerability, and acceptance of heterogeneity as essential to life” (Joh 2006: xxi). Korean *jeong* therefore presupposes a long-term relationship associated with various emotions and feelings, which may be good or bad socially or morally. It is therefore said that “time makes people friends.” Over-layered and over-determined emotions through a long-term relationship can make people not to avoid friendly relationship. Thus, Korean *jeong* also has its fascinating history of various emotions shared among the Korean people.

Whether it is Chinese or Korean, *jeong* has its significant role in being human. Instead of the duality of heaven and earth, and of *yin* and *yang*, traditional Korean culture has emphasized the threefold foundation (*sam-jae* 三才) of heaven, earth, and humanity (Heo 2020: 153–166). The Chinese term *jeong/qing* itself derives from the *Book of Changes*, but Korean thought emphasizes its unique role in being human morally and emotionally. This can be found especially in the so-called Four-Seven

debate (*sadanchiljeongron* 사단칠정론 四端七情論), which provides “a unique window on the complex ‘study of the nature and principle’ of the dominant Ch’eng-Zhu tradition of Neo-Confucianism” (Kalton 1994: xvii–xviii). Here, the Seven refers to the Seven Emotions (feelings) (*chiljeong* 七情): joy (*hui* 희 喜), anger (*no* 노 怒), grief (*ae* 애 哀), fear (*gu* 구 懼), love (*ae* 애 愛), hatred (*o* 오 惡), and desire (*yok* 욕 欲), which are listed in a passage of the *Book of Rites* that “symbolized the feelings (emotions) in general” (Kalton 1994: xxvii).

In *Mencius*, one of the Four Books of Confucianism, the Four refers to the “Four Beginnings” or four moral sprouts (*sadan* 四端): the heart-mind of compassion (*cheugeunjisim* 惻隱之心), the heart-mind of shame and dislike (*suojisim* 수오지심 羞惡之心), the heart-mind of yielding and deference [courtesy and modesty] (*sayangjisim* 사양지심 辭讓之心), and the heart-mind of discerning right and wrong (*sibijisim* Adobe Myungjo Std 是非之心). These mind-hearts (*sim/xin* 心) are the beginnings of humanity (*in/ren* 仁; human-heartedness or benevolence), righteousness (*ni/yi* 의 義), propriety (*ye/li* 예 禮), and wisdom (*ji/zhi* 지 智), respectively (*Mencius*, 2A: 6 and 6A: 6; see Kalton 1994: xxvii–xxviii). The debate centers around whether emotions/feelings in general include the Four Beginnings or the latter have their different origins from emotions/feelings in general. Later, it is extended over the nature of the relationship between *i/li* and *gi/qi* between essential (original) human nature and (biological) human nature, and between the *Dao* mind and the ordinary human mind (Kalton 1994: xxix).

Toegye (Yi Hwang; 1501–1570), the most eminent Confucian tinker in Korea, argued that the Four Beginnings are “the issuance of *i/li* (principle),” whereas “the seven emotions are the issuance of *gi/qi* (vital energy).” By contrast, Gobong (Gi Daeseung; 1527–1572), Toegye’s Four-Seven debater, argued that both the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings belong to feelings in general and they cannot be separated because *i/li* and *gi/qi* are not separate (Kalton 1994: 4). Although Toegye accepted Gobong’s criticism, he still argued that the Four Beginnings can be regarded as essential human nature (*bonjiljiseong* 本質之性, substance) which is purely good, while the Seven Emotions refer to physical nature (*gijiljiseong* 氣質之性, function) which can lead to either good or evil. In this way, Toegye emphasized the moral priority of the Four Beginnings such as compassion over the seven ordinary emotions such as joy, anger, and desire. The reason why Toegye insisted on the Four-Seven dualism is

that emotions and feelings can be good or evil depending on whether or not they are properly controlled. However, the Four Beginnings as moral emotions, according to Mencius, refer to “the four inherently good dispositions” which confirms the innate goodness of human nature (Kalton 1994: xxv).

As a matter of fact, the Confucian texts are not clear about the relationship between the Four and the Seven. In Confucian texts, the feelings such as joy, anger, fear or desire were “viewed as the mind-and-heart’s most fundamental form of activity” (xxii). In this train of thought, the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings cannot be separated, although they can be distinguished. The conclusion of the debate is not so important for the purpose of this chapter, but what highly interests us here is that being-human in its most genuine sense can be achieved through the right training of the mind-heart. This training is not an intellectual one but focuses on the right way of controlling our emotions/feelings, that is, establishing good will and making the mind-heart right. In this sense, being-human is about the right expression of emotions/feelings. How to perceive the will of heaven and to embody it within our daily lives is fundamentally the matter of practicing the good mind-heart such as the Four Beginnings through harmonizing emotions/feelings (Seven Feelings).

Note that the Four Beginnings such as the heart-mind of compassion, the heart-mind of shame and dislike, the heart-mind of yielding and deference, and the heart-mind of (discerning) right and wrong are also social emotions beyond the moral Confucian notion of inner feelings, although distinguishing emotion from feeling is not easy in this context. The Four Beginnings can arise from and through our social relations with others. To practice cardinal virtues such as humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, one has to cultivate one’s mind and body. Feelings such as desire, hate, love, fear, grief, anger, and joy should be cultivated into good affects, so that society can follow *Dao* as these social emotions are well established.

The Western conceptual definitions of emotion do not exactly fit into this kind of understanding, especially when emotion/feeling in the Western culture refers to the psychological process of the inner mind. Especially since the Enlightenment, “being-human” has always referred to “individual.” Thus, psychology has dealt within the inner state of an individual person. However, Confucian self-cultivation is more than governing the mind and it usually accompanies bodily praxis. As a matter of fact, emotion accompanies bodily responses and it thus cannot be separated from the body. Also, emotional responses have an important role in our

conscious decision-making process. In this sense, emotions are an interface in connecting the mind, the body and the world (Ledoux 2006: 55–57).

Emotions, such as the Seven Emotions ought to be cultivated into the mind-heart with the Four Beginnings of virtue. In this Korean Confucian train of thought, emotions/feelings therefore not only relate to the interplay between *i/li* (principle) and *gi/qi* (vital energy) but are also a moral and socio-psychological medium or interface between the self and others, between heaven and world for achieving the good nature.

8.3 DANGERS OF UNSTABLE EMOTIONS IN THE CONNECTED WORLD

We are living in the world of brilliant technologies that seem to connect everything. Human brain has the ability “to adapt to different operating conditions as the physical, ecological, and social environment changes, and to alter its structure so that it will respond appropriately to specific environments in the future (‘learning’)” (Ellis and Solms 2018: 49), and it is called neuroplasticity or plasticity. With the plasticity, the mind can extend over the world through artificial devices. Bodily functions can be coupled with artificial devices and extended. Clark calls it the extended mind, according to which human mind can extend over the world through its bodily extensions of technological equipment and artificial prostheses such as eyeglasses, smartphone, digital networks and so on. Indeed, all technologies are the extension of human being and, in fact, of the human body, according to Marshall McLuhan, and the extensions act according to its mind, which is a different dimension of the sum of the bodily parts and their extensions (McLuhan 2011). The mind is the emergence of the extended body. In this sense, Andy Clark talks of “supersizing the mind” (Clark 2011).

However, all the human technologies are also the product of autoamputation (McLuhan 2011: 37). In other words, they are our human failure to recognize them as the extensions of human beings. The human central nerve system cannot stand the stress from the new extension (or new technological invention) of the body because the new extension requires the new balance and intensity of the body. So, it anaesthetizes its sense of the self by otherizing the extension as different from one’s self. In this way, humans can exploit and manipulate technological products at their wills. This anesthesia of senses is like “psychological rigor mortis” or a symptom

of “somnambulism” (McLuhan 2011: 62). It works by causing psychological rigor mortis to protect the central nerve system. Thus, the existing perspective of the system regards the new extension as the other to itself. In this context, new technology can be the stimulus for invention because the central nerve system (CNS) has to find out a way to live with the new technology as the other. The sensual anesthesia is a midpoint for the self-based upon the CNS to incorporate the extension as part of itself.

Notwithstanding, autoamputation can cause problems to the mind in that it is generated by the failure of the emotion/feeling with its existing boundary of the body/self. The hybridization of human mind and body with other media generates new kinds of stress for the central nerve system, which in turn amputates the extension by the hybridization, falling into the state of psychological rigor mortis in order to prevent its mental collapse. Blocking or paralyzing the senses from the extension, that is, doing the autoamputation, the central nerve system can maintain its homeostasis, which marks its boundary between the inner and the outer bodies. Thus, autoamputation can indicate the anxiety and embarrassment of the mind. That is, it can be the emotional problems for us. As a matter of fact, “humans” can be said as media or as interface between the mind and the world. When our human brains are connected to digital machines, our emotions and feelings, which make us feel being human, cannot be stable, because the emotions are part of the homeostasis system of the biological human body. What would it be like when human body as an interface will couple itself with a machine body and a digital network? Can emotions work as they were?

Franco Berardi warns of the danger of the polarization of sensibility and sensitivity in the semiocapitalist society. A digitally all-connected environment causes “desensitization,” which does not derive from the content of what people do but from the stimulus they receive (Berardi 2013: 63). The human mind works with the body equipped with senses and emotions. Our bodily senses consist of five types, but the digital environment mainly stimulates visual and auditory senses. The tactile functions at the tips of fingers on the keyboard. The digital generation learns things from the machines rather than from parents. It causes them a “polarization of sensibility and sensitivity” (2013: 43). Sensitivity refers to the capacity of human senses to process information, while sensibility does to human capacity to understand and to sympathize with others (43). Due to sensibility, humans can understand what cannot be expressed in language and grasp the sense of continuity, the flow of sympathy, and non-verbal signs.

In normal situations, sensitivity and sensibility work together. However, the desensitization brings about the polarization of sensitivity and sensibility. These days, under the pandemic situation, the transition from contact to connection in human relations has been accelerated. Humans in this networked world can process information, but they lose their ability to understand and sympathize with others. In the digital world, the human capability of sensibility seems to be disappearing.

Sensibility is based upon the exchange or sympathy among human beings. It is none other than the exchange of social emotions. In other words, human contact is not just a meeting but, more importantly, an event to transform for the self to be transformed into a becoming-other by sympathizing other people's emotions and feelings. It is more than a mechanical processing of information from stimulus from the outside. When our lifestyle undergoes a transition from contact to connection, it would be more difficult to understand and sympathize with the others. Understanding of and sympathy with others work within the social matrix of emotions, which is more than personal emotion and feeling.

8.4 THE PRECARIOUS CONDITION FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONS

The brain does not directly contact the world, but it rather experiences the world through the body and its senses as interfaces. Bodily senses convert external stimulus into the activity of neurons. This conversion is not based on one-to-one correspondence between the external and the internal, but it rather transmutes the external stimulus according to the receptive structure and characteristics of the senses. Thus, the information of the external world, which the brain constructs, is not an objective one but the one that an organism needs to know for its own survival, flourishing, and reproduction. Then, the brain stores important information for later purposes in terms of memory. The main function of the memory is to prevent the danger in the future. Emotions are accompanying with this memory process. They are like indexes or underlines to mark important information or passages for a later purpose. When an organism encounters the same kind of event or danger or object, its emotion is summoned before its consciousness arises to recover the memory. The emotion as the index for the danger in the experience often has a negative tone. Thus, our memory is often full of negative experiences and feelings rather than of happy and joyful ones.

To the contrary, the contemporary social structure of semiocapitalism has given birth to a very precarious condition for the minds of the people, especially of laborers. Under the labor condition of the fractalization of time, the minds of workers are always on alert to get a work order from the network through email, SNS, website, or apps on the cellular phone. They are called the precariats, which means precarious proletariats, existing without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare. They do not have time to take care of their unstable minds and emotions. The top priority for the precariats under the pressure of infinite competition is to be the winner, no matter what.

What is problematic is that there is no winner under this chain of infinite competition, because the expected winner must sacrifice what is precious for themselves: emotions and feelings, that is, the emotional life of the self. Being a winner does not mean that competition is over and that the winner is decided. Rather, winning simply means getting a temporary job or project, and the game of the roulette of selection will be spun after the job is done. In the classic times of the industrial capitalism, work and leisure were separated because workers had to go to work in the morning and come home in the late afternoon.

For all that, in the contemporary world of semiocapitalism, there is no distinction between work and leisure because the digital network turns home into an office or workplace: working from home, which means that there is no chance to leave the office and there is no emancipation from our cellular phones. Indeed, everywhere is our workplace. You can work even during your sleep; your cellular and computer will help you out!

Under the semiocapitalist social environment where our nerves become extremely sensitive due to excessive attention to any stimulus, that is, where things literally get on “my” nerve, not only the personal but also the social dimensions of our emotions are now on the verge of collapse. In this context, in which our social relations are now turned into contactless ones through digital networks, the collapse of our mental health has been expressed with violent and perverted expressions of our personal and social emotions.

According to Antonio Damasio, emotion is part of the “homeostasis” of organism to maintain and control the state of its mind and body (Damasio 1999, 40). This means that emotions play a key part in the process of life, of which the organism in question takes control. Damasio distinguishes emotion that senses the external environment from feeling that constructs the subjective experience of the external stimulus, accompanying the emergence of consciousness. In this process, consciousness

publicly or externally expresses its inner (subjective) feelings, disclosing the will and intention of the self. The modern division of consciousness and emotions/feelings cannot be maintained any longer. What is problematic for us is that, although the emotional process is almost unconscious, the semicapitalist environment presses and accelerates the polarization of sensibility and sensitivity, and it in turn will make not so little impact upon our emotional structure. The polarized emotion would lack its capacity for sympathy and thus trap in some violent emotional energy seeking out its exit. However, when it lacks the sensibility, which is human ability to understand and sympathize with others, it can lead to violent expression or tragic suicidal attempt.

The point here is that this condition of unstable emotions is not just a personal condition but rather a social condition, in which we can communicate through emotions. One needs to remind that emotion is not only to perceive the *Umwelt* each organism senses as its surroundings but also to express and communicate its inner feelings with other beings in the world. Thus, emotions work on the social dimension and when the semicapitalist condition of living causes the social matrix of emotional expression to be faulty, our social emotions become precarious, unstable, volatile, and negative. Indeed, emotions are the social matrix in which human organisms can understand and communicate with each other in a way to build up their society, rather than being “secondary” or “background” ones (Damasio 1999: 51).

Indeed, human beings are social animals sharing and communicating their feelings through emotions. When the power of semicapitalism brings about excessive overload upon the mind, causing fatigue, exhaustion, a sense of helplessness, and thus a sense of impotence, leading to depression, rage, violence, terror, or even suicidal attempts, we know the healthy social matrix of emotions can collapse.

Although the basic expressions of emotions follow their genetic pathways, learning and culture can offer individuals a chance to have their expressive differences and to add a new dimension of meaning. That is, one can construct the expressive horizon of social emotions, depending on one’s social context. In doing so, one may heal the social disease that the socio-economic structure of semicapitalism has brought about, especially the social collapse of mental health in a way to express social empathy and to share each other’s pain and suffering. Especially, Christian theology expresses one of such emotions as compassion or com/passion (cf. Keller 2008: 115–116). Can we change the social matrix for emotional expressions in a way to encourage and heal each other?

8.5 HAN (恨), HEUNG (興), AND JEONG (情): UNIQUE FEELINGS IN KOREAN CULTURE

Emotions have social dimensions to share and communicate with other people through diverse expressions. Social emotions include embarrassment, guilt, shame, jealousy, envy, elevation, empathy, pride, and so on. Also, these social emotions would have cultural patterns to express them, depending on their cultures, areas, climate, and so on. When one calls “Korean emotions,” it does not refer to individual patterns of emotions but to the social patterns unique to Korean culture. Korean social culture can be characterized with drinking, dancing, singing, and eating. Some groups of Koreans notoriously drink a lot, even all night long. They enjoy singing and dancing in the so-called *Noraebang*, Korean *Karaoke*. Also, they like good heavy eating, as their eating scenes are broadcasted by the *Meokbang* (먹방) television program, which is now becoming world-famous.

Nonetheless, this culture is not a contemporary phenomenon. The *Records of Three Kingdoms* (*samguggi* 三國志) by Jinsu (陳壽 233–297) includes the *Book of Wei* (*weiseo* 魏書) consisting of thirty chapters and calling it the 30th chapter titled as the *Stories of Donggi* (*dongijeon* 東夷傳). The term *Donggi* does not refer to a particular tribe, but it can be translated as barbarians in the East, including Koreans. In the stories, it describes the *Donggi* cultures as following: “There is huge gathering, people eat food, drink, sing and dance several days” (Choi 2012: 62). The Korean pop-culture of eating, drinking, singing, and dancing has originated in the ancient religious events for revering heaven. Although the ancient religious ritual did not survive today, our contemporary pop culture maintains its practices. Through eating, drinking, singing, and dancing together, people pile their shared emotions and build *jeong* between them. In this culture, people emit exhilaration (*heung* 흥/興), dissolve negative feelings (*han* 한/恨), and build up intimacy and mutual bond (*jeong* 정/情).

Recently, some Korean scholars have paid their attention to the emotional sensibility of Koreans. It is about what is Korean or Korean uniqueness. Sim Gwanghyeon (2005) suggests the dynamic coupling structure of *han* and *heung* and Shin Eungyeong (1999) articulates the triadic structure of Korean sensibility in terms of *han*, *heung*, and non-attachment (*musim* 무심/無心; literally “no heart-mind”). Especially, Sin includes them under the ethos of *pungnyu* (also spelled *poong-ryu* 풍류 風流; aesthetic entertainment of life). *Pungnyu* literally means “flow of wind,” but

it refers to a way to attain *Dao* or truth according to our human nature. While enjoying some beautiful landscapes, the *seonbi*—Korean noble intellectuals—can write a poem or draw a picture or sing a song, and, in this way, the noble come close to the Way. It is an aesthetic sublimation of life through their plays.

Korean sensibility has been well known as *han*. A Korean American theologian Andrew Sung Park introduces *han* as “the critical wound of the heart generated by unjust psychosomatic repression, as well as by social, political, economic, and cultural oppression” (Park 1993, 10). In fact, according to Park, *han* has revealed many diverse aspects in Korean life, especially in the late twentieth century. There is no doubt that *han* is not a monolithic feeling but rather a complex, overlaid and abundant emotion. However, Korean emotions also include *heung*, *musim*, and *jeong*. Although we can characterize one of Korean affects as *han*, these Korean social emotions have a lot more meaning and implication.

Korean people’s pattern of emotional expression has its collective social dynamics among various emotions such as *han*, *heung*, *musim*, and *jeong*. For example, as *han* deepens, it can reach at a point of reversal to be a potential energy to exhilarate. This is why Sim (2005) talks of the coupling structure of *han* and *heung*. Again, here one needs to remind that emotion is part of the homeostasis system, and it is the same case in the social minds (Damasio 2018: 169–170). Given Damasio’s theory of homeostasis, emotions do not work alone. To maintain the state of homeostasis, each emotion has to be coupled with opposite one for an organism to maintain psychological and physiological balances. For example, when a sad emotion goes to an extreme, the homeostasis system seeks for a way to balance it with the opposite emotion, for example, joy. If this system of homeostasis does not work, the person with sad emotion can fall into an extreme state of the emotion and make up their mind in an extreme act like suicide. Here, feelings, which are the subjective constructions of the emotive responses to the stimulus from the outside, play a crucial role. When an organism is “forced to operate outside the well-being range and they drift into disease and toward death, feelings inject into the thinking process a striving for a desirable homeostatic range” (Damasio 2018: 171). As Damasio also states,

Situations of loss result in sadness and despair, whose presence solicits empathy and compassion, which stimulate the creative imagination to produce counters to the sadness and despair ...: a song or a poem. The ensuing

resumption of homeostatic conditions opens the way for recruiting more complex feeling states—gratitude and hope, for example—and a subsequent reasoned elaboration over those feeling state. (172–173)

In this aspect, emotions, feelings, and reasons cooperate to maintain homeostasis for organism. However, one needs to remember that feelings “result from engaging emotions that release not just to the isolated individual but to the *individual in the context of others*” (172). These inner feelings are expressed with emotive expressions outside to signify and/or communicate things to others. Thus, emotions are social and counterbalanced for homeostasis. Sim’s (2005) idea of the coupling of *han* and *heung* works in this context. Even so, emotional coupling relations are not fixed but dependent upon the context of homeostasis. For instance, when the despair situation of *han* needs a warm encouragement, it will couple with *jeong*. Likewise, when it needs cheering up, it will do with *heung*.

With regard to the Korean dynamics of emotion, both Sim (2005) and Shin (1999) refer to *pungnyu* culture, in which “our ancestors revere and enjoy the web of life, they tie heaven, earth, and human beings together,” and they “apprehend mountain, water, points of the compass, and human being as one web of life” (Sim 2005: 45). Further Sim presents it as the “original aesthetic categorical system of North-East Asian culture” (Sim 2005: 65).

The first record of *pungnyu* appeared the *Nangnang* inscription by Choe Chiwon, and the book *The History of Three Kingdoms* transmitted part of the inscription: “There is a subtle *Do/Dao* (Way) being passed down to generations in the nation, and it is called *pungnyudo* (風流道).” The group of people practicing this *Dao* is called *pungnyudo* (風流徒) or *hwarangdo* (화랑 花娘徒)” (Shin 1999: 41). The core teaching of *pungnyudo* is summarized as “the inclusion of three teachings” (*pohamsamgyo* 포함삼교, 包含三教) and “making-friends-and-living-together” (*jeophwagunsae* 접화군생, 接化群生) (Shin 1999: 42). The inclusion of three teachings means that Korean spirituality subsumes the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism under the original Korean spirituality of *pungnyu*. “Making-friends-and-living-together” means the edification of all living beings, including plants and animals, by making friendship. On the basis of these principles, *hwarang* disciples practice *pungnyu*, and this includes emotional trainings like enjoying songs as well as intellectual, personal, and moral practices. Interestingly, dressing up and making up oneself is part of practicing *pungnyu*, and this means that the cultivation

of appearance is connected to the cultivation of the inner mind. In this sense, *pungnyudo* involves the cultivation of artistic or aesthetic sense (Shin 1999: 42).

According to Shin, *pungnyudo* is actualized with one of three types of *heung*, *han*, and *musim*. Given Shin's notion of *pungnyu* as an aesthetic categorial system, the three types of emotions respectively appear when the subject encounters aesthetic objects. *Heung* arises when the subject makes a positive relationship with objects and actuality and positively apprehends them. Thus, it gives the subject a bright feeling. *Han* accumulates when the subject experience alienation in their actual life. *Han* basically implies the passive and negative perspectives. *Musim*, *non-attachment*, points to a transcendental aesthetic feeling beyond the binarism of positive/negative, good/evil, joyfulness/sadness, and so on, which dominates our quotidian minds. Each type of the spirit of *pungnyu* leads to the extinction of the self, but each way to extinguish the self is different. *Musim* realizes the elimination of self through its transcendence of the discriminating self; *han* does it by creating a vacuum of self-consciousness; *heung* does it through the release of self-consciousness (Shin 1999, 591).

Sim's (2005) main contribution lies in his discovery that Korean sensibility has a coupling structure of *han* and *heung*. As I mentioned above, emotions are a part of the homeostasis system of the body for its survival and reproduction. In other words, the purpose of any emotion is not for feeling itself but for stabilizing the poise of mind and body. Just as the feeling of joyfulness is balanced with that of sadness, the collective emotion of *han* is always poised with that of *heung*, which is the feeling of joyfulness and fun. As a matter of fact, *pungnyu* refers to an "art of play with taste and elegance in a withdrawal from secular works" and thus to "artful plays of writing poems, singing, drinking and dancing" (Shin 1999, 19).

In other words, *pungnyu* is a cultural art to recover the balance between *han* and *heung*, like the relationship between *yin* and *yang*. However, it does not seek for a simple equilibrium but a relationship of dynamic circulation: "*heung* accumulates into *han* when it cannot be released. When the repressed *han* gets loose, *heung* soars to the high with great intensity and magnitude" (Sim 2005: 77). Indeed, when the repressed *han* is released like a blast, *heung* flies high like a spring. Sim's observation on the dynamic relationship between *han* and *heung* corrects the existing conceptual coupling of *jeong* and *han*. For example, The Korean people's cheering gathering for their national team's soccer game during the World Cup 2002

showed the national dimension of *heung*. Street demonstrations such as the protest against the import of US beef in 2008 and the protest for the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye in 2016 exemplified this dynamic relationship of *han* and *heung*. Although people gathered to protest against political oppressions, these street demonstrations were full of people singing songs, concert festivals, and plays and snacks the repressed *han* of the people in the street demonstrations burst forth into singing and shouting out rallying words together. They were indeed festive movements. The people enjoyed the protests like feasts.

The dynamic circulation of *han* and *heung* is sublimated into non-attachment (*musim* 無心), according to Shin (1999). The exhilaration in singing the campaign songs and shouting out the rallying words lets the repression of the minds discharge through the collective emotions of anger expressed with tears. In fact, any emotional expression has a discharging effect. This emotional discharge leads to a state of sublimation giving birth to “a transcendental aesthetic feeling beyond the binarism of positive/negative, good/evil, joyfulness/sadness, and so on, which dominates our quotidian minds.” Non-attachment is a passive translation of the word *musim* (무심/無心). As a matter of fact, the discharging state can be described as transcendence, detachment or aloofness, or rising above the ways of the mundane world. In this regard, *musim* is a way of *chotal* (초탈/超脫), which means a state of de/constructive transcendence. *Chotal* is not an exoteric transcendence state, but a state of not clinging to any quotidian matters. Therefore, both *musim* and *chotal* mean “non-attachment.” Literally, it implies a state of transcendence and escape. It means a certain state of getting away from the emotional fluctuation in daily lives. In this sense, Shin (1999) describes *pungnyu* as the triadic structure of East Asian aesthetics. From the aesthetic perspective, one can say that the dynamic circulation of *han* and *heung* has an exit to sublimation. It is an exit from the respectively extreme states of *han* and *heung*. Thus, in this triadic constitution of *pungnyu*, the non-attachment works as a stopper or stabilizer to cap the climax of *han* and *heung*. Thus, the East Asian aesthetics of *pungnyu* seeks for the homeostatic equilibrium in the emotional fluctuation on the level of the collective.

Regardless of her creative insights of the aesthetic triad of *han*, *heung*, and *musim*, Shin fails in finding that those three cultural elements of Korea are “emotions” on the collective level. Her model of *pungnyu* is *seonbi* who were a noble intellectual class. They are not vulgar people, and this is why she emphasizes the sublime dimension of non-attachment. The

triadic structure of *pungnyu* through *han*, *heung*, and *musim* really makes sense when one talks of aesthetics. However, for Shin (1999), aesthetic only means a sublime play of noble men, not vulgar people or women. The ancient tradition of the festivals for revering Heaven was “Dionysian,” and, in this sense, it was the festival of *jeong* (Choi 2012, 70). In this sense, Shin’s focus on *pungnyu* may reflect destructive parts of the Korean Confucian cultural heritage, noblemen-centered culture. Sin’s description of *pungnyu* culture seems to violate its spirit to benefit people all over the world (*jeophwa gunsaeung* 接化群生). Thus, one needs to apply the coupling structure here. Non-attachment does not work alone, as it functions as a social emotion. Rather, I would argue that non-attachment needs to be coupled with *jeong*, as *heung* and *han* are coupled.

Without talking about *jeong*, Shin’s triadic aesthetic structure falls short of describing the Korean emotion/feeling. Without talking about *jeong* it is impossible to understand Korean sensibility. Sensibility basically works through bodily emotional states—although it includes moral and ethical dimensions on a higher state—as the interface to other beings and the world, and thus, without *jeong*, one cannot fully describe the Korean sensibility, especially when our human sensibility is on the verge of collapse under the semicapitalistic structure.

The Korean culture of eating, drinking, singing, and dancing can be summarized as the culture of *jeong*, in which *heung* and *han* creatively interact and complement each other. In the culture of *jeong*, ideally, the oppressor and the oppressive can eat, drink, sing, and dance together, and they can play as friends. Of course, play itself does not refer to *jeong*, but it can be an occasion to build up the relationship of *jeong*. Koreans cannot stand a solemn, calculative, emotionally neutral relationship, as the ancient text witnesses. This national collective disposition naturally seeks for a group culture, in which people plie *jeong* through eating, drinking, singing, and dancing. *Jeong* is formed between humans, especially when they have long-term relationships, in which all kinds of relational feelings such as bitterness, friendliness, mutualism, manipulation, betrayal, commitment, and so on have experienced and shared together. In this *jeong*-centered cultural ethos, conflict is not a necessary process toward justice. Rather, before the fulfillment of justice, conflict ought to be dissolved. *Jeong* does not forget complex emotional conflicts, but it embraces them in a form of hateful *jeong* (*miunjeong* 미운정). It is reasonable to say that *Jeong* goes beyond any conflicts.

In some cases Korean *jeong* can appear in the form of paternalism or favoritism, which excessively emphasizes *injeong* (인정/人情) that can be translated as “sticky friendship” in this case, and this ethos of *injeong* prefers situational considerations over principle and justice in human connections and relations. Literally, *injeong* means “human(-hearted) emotions” or *jeong* between people. However, it may turn into a form of paternalism, and, in this case, it can lead to a paternalistic consequence disregarding the principle of justice in the matters of judgment. Thus, *jeong* is often called “enemy-like *jeong*” (*wonsugatun jeong* 원수같은 정) because it is often beyond enemy relationship and beyond revenge feeling. In this context, *jeong* can be manipulated as the logic of a cover-up of injustice. With an excuse to avoid conflict between friends, injustice or corruption is overlooked.

Musim/non-attachment seems to be a stabilizer to this *jeong*-centered mind and society. Getting away from the emotional cling to friendly relations, one with non-attachment takes a step back from the emotionally charged judgment and relationships. This detached attitude has its origin in the Chinese Daoist philosophy of Laozi (BC 604[?]-unknown) and Zhuangzi (BC 369-BC 286[?]), which is also called the Lao-Zhuang thought (*No-Jang sasang* 노장사상) in Korea. The Korean word *musim* does not mean no-attachment but attachment without clinging. Non-attachment rejects any kind of simple judgment and unilateral criterion because identities are constructed, fluid, and multiple. Thus, it asks one to step back from things in interest. The stepping back means forgetting the distance between subject and object, between being and non-being. It is none other than emptying, which is even beyond discernment of being and non-being. It is forgetting of any discrimination, and further of oneself. It can motivate a realization of one’s self on a wider horizon because *musim* shows the play of nature. When one’s self can be one with nature, one now can see things from the eyes of nature, from which everything is a play of “self-so-ing” (*jayeon/ziran* 자연/自然), which refers to nature in English. Everything is just a play of self-so-ing, in which there is no-I, no-you, and no-it in that nature’s self embraces all beings without discrimination. In other words, it is “thingification” in the sense of materialization (*mullwa* 物化). One can see life in general from the eyes of a thing or things. In this aspect, things and I are not different. Every “thing” is part of “thingification” as the “self-so-ing.” In this mind of non-attachment and thingification, *han* is resolved, and *heung* exhilaratingly turns into the vitality of life. In this way, non-attachment is another way to pile up *jeong* with every other being, including non-human beings and non-organic things.

At the center of Korean sensibility, there are two coupled emotions, *heung-han* and *jeong-musim* through which life becomes a *jeong*-ful playground rather than a field of competitions under the pressure of natural selection. As Jesper Hoffmeyer recognizes life process not as the process of natural selection but as “natural play” (2008: xiii), Korean sensibility finds life as play, in which natural feelings such as joy, anger, sorrow, and happiness (*huinoacerak* 喜怒哀樂) are entangled and play together. Life at least on the human level is not just about infinite competition for reproduction and survival. Indeed, nature shows play-like behaviors, which gives birth to the creative dimension in natural selection, and it is “natural play” that adds the *heung* of life to the evolutionary process. These dimensions of play and *heung* are obliterated from the evolutionary discourse because they only see the competition of individual organisms. However, on the level of the collective, one’s sadness ironically can be the other’s joy, one’s anger the other’s happiness. Even sharing the sadness with others can form solidarity, and pain begins to turn into the ignition of love by sharing it with others.

8.6 *JEONG* (情): EMOTIONS TO HEAL THE SEMIOCAPITALIST TRAUMA

Jeong can be a resistance against contemporary semiocapitalist societies under the pressure of infinite competition and the winner-takes-it-all mind. We are living in the world of on-going competition, and although everyone already has their chance to be a loser, they never imagine that they can be one of losers. Any imagination of being a loser can make me weak, so that they tend to disregard any possibility of it. However, by the flip side of the same token, everyone is afraid of being a loser on the track of competition. Thus, instead of trying to be a winner, which is almost im/possible dream for everyone because the chances are really slime due to class differences and social discriminations, they try to suppress and trap possible competitor around them.

Jeong as a collective emotion resists this competitive ethos of capitalism. We live with *jeong*, whether they are enemy or friend. A friend once can turn into an enemy someday, and *vice versa*. One can say that there is no reliable friend. However, one can also talk about the flip side that everyone has a possibility to be friends. *Jeong* lures people into a relationship of friend in a way it “not only smooths harsh feelings, such as dislike or even

hate, but has a way of making relationships richly complex by moving away from a binary, oppositional perception of reality, such as oppressor and oppressed” (Joh 2006: xxi). In her book *Heart of Cross*, Joh calls *jeong* “the power embodied in redemptive relationships” (xxi). She goes on to say that “*jeong* makes relationship sticky” (xxii):

When *jeong* is present in a relationship, a person might appear as an “enemy” because of structural impositions, but in one-to-one relationality, the relation between self and the same enemy could be fraught with compassion, recognition, and even acceptance and eventual forgiveness. Ultimately, it is this intimate existential recognition of the self mirrored in the other that leads to transformation of the heart (Joh 2006: 97). Moreover, Joh sees *jeong* as what overcomes *han* (41). She finds the “transgressive power” in the coupling of *jeong* and *han* (97). Thus, the Korean government has attempted to sort out the communist betrayers, sadly covering up the pro-Japanese traitors, who have taken up the political power of the right conservatives. The very tragic and complex history of Korea in the twentieth century has made us inappropriate to sharply distinguish the victims from the perpetrators.

The real transgressed power of *jeong* lies in its power to thrust itself between victims and perpetrators, deterritorializing the binary structure of “us” versus “them” and subverting them with compassion. Joh emphasizes that *jeong* is not based upon the logic of “either-or” but that of “both/and” (Joh 2006: 97). One often realizes that the perpetrator is not always a winner of their game but also another victim of the system. As a matter of fact, in the winner-takes-it-all game, no one will become a winner because one has to sacrifice something important for their life to win the game. There is no game without any sacrifices. That is, everyone is already a loser in that one already sacrificed the very precious for one’s life. The power of *jeong* lies in its recognition of this loss in everyone. That is why a Christian as a follower of Jesus can hug even the enemy because they already saw the pain and suffering in the perpetrator’s heart without forgetting the fact of their crime. In this sense, *jeong* is a power to deterritorialize the binary logic of perpetrator/victim and of winner/loser in the semicapitalist actuality.

Living is always already entangled living. That is to say, life means living and dying with other beings in relationships. In other words, “I” is to be affected by other beings and *vice versa*. The “we” are always entangled in relations and multiply located. One can be a victim at a certain time and space as well as a perpetrator at other situations. In this intricately

relationality, one forms a *jeong* with the other(s). Joh notes that “*jeong* makes relationships sticky” (xiv). It is a kind of love anticipating its failure. One’s entry into a relationship of love with the other means risking one-self. Failure would accumulate into the fold of *han*, and, when *han* is ripened in ongoing relationships, it has a chance to be emancipated from the oppressive structure. It means that *jeong* enable the subject to overcome anxiety, enmity, and revenge feeling. It is not a kind of abandonment under the enormous structure of the oppression, but a resisting will against the oppressive structure in order to re/construct relationship in an emancipatory way. It is a reconstruction of the past not from the memory of the victimized self but from that of the emancipated self.

Love is destined to fail because there lies an abyss between the subject and the object, although one is the subject and at the same time the object, depending on the angle one sees the other. However, as a loser, one knows what the failure means for the self. Through the sympathy of failure or through one’s experiences of pain and suffering as losers, we can be with others. A feminist constructive theologian, Catherin Keller, calls this feeling of sympathy *com/passion* following the Greek etymology of *ευσπλαχνία* (suffer with): “For compassion is literally *passion-with* the other” (Keller 2008: 115). She goes on to say that “passion is only sustainable in as much as it modulates into *com/passion*” (116). To be with the other’s pain and suffering requires one’s passion of love towards the other because any pain, even the other’s, still hurts. However, this *jeong* or *com/passion* is need for us to live in the semicapitalist society.

8.7 CONCLUSION

In closing, the Korean notion of emotions/feelings is based upon their understanding of being human. Although the term *jeong/qing* comes from Chinese Confucian texts, the Korean Four-Seven debate makes one pay more attention to the emotional and ethical feature of what it means to be truly human. From a perspective of the Four-Seven debate, the core way of being human is the self-cultivation of emotions/feelings, and this insight corresponds to the contemporary scientific understanding of emotions that accompanies bodily response to external stimulus and the formation of feelings inside. In other words, when emotions and feelings are not cultivated well, one cannot fulfill the cardinal virtues of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom.

Arguably, the contemporary connected world provides a powerful condition in which our emotional harmony can collapse and our sensibility and sensitivity are polarized and broken down. The rapid development of brilliant technologies has caused our central nerve system to autoamputate the body. Under this emotionally unstable condition, Koreans continue enjoying a culture of eating, drinking, singing, and dancing, the culture of *heung*, *han*, and *jeong*, since the ancient times. As a matter of fact, Korean culture of *han*, *heung*, *musim*, and *jeong* has become a matrix to accept Confucian understanding of being human, as the Four-Seven debate shows. We can note that the Korean Four-Seven interpretation of emotions resonates with Korean social emotions, insofar as the emotion of *heung* (흥/興; exhilaration or utmost joy) seems to be associated with Confucian *rak* (락/樂; joy) and *hui/xi* (희/喜; happiness, pleasure) and two of the Seven Emotions, and *han* (한/恨; resentment, suffering) is closely related to Confucian *ae/ai* (애/哀; sorrow, grief), another key example of the Seven.

When the pandemic has changed our global culture from contact to non-contact ones, can these Korean socio-cultural emotions of *heung*, *han*, and *jeong* offer positive alternatives? I suggest that the Four-Seven debate gives us a clue: to be human means to be cultivated through our emotional and relational practice. Our neuroplasticity is based upon “the ability of the brain to adapt to different operating conditions as the physical, ecological, and social environment, and to alter its structure” (Ellis and Solms 2018: 49) and, as we know, emotions play very crucial roles in cognition, decision-making, memory, the will, and so on. The spirit of *pungnyu/heung* is to respect differences among people and to benefit all humans accordingly. Emotions as a part of the homeostasis of the body seek to find a balance, for example, finding *heung* when the *han* of the pandemic deepens. To conclude, we can appreciate this transformation as an art that shows a harmonized beauty of *heung*, *han*, and *jeong*, as much as when the popular Korean signing group BTS (Bang Tan Sonyeondan) sings their songs to bring comfort to the people with despair and helplessness:

*You know it all
you're my best friend
the morning will come again.
Because no darkness, no season will last forever. (Bomnal 봄날, Spring Day)*

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