



# Moon-Young Lee's Transcendence Ethics for Democratic Public Administration: Meanings and Rationales of Lee's Nonviolence<sup>1)</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines Professor Moon-Young Lee's academic achievement, which has been less highlighted than his popular image of a pro-democracy fighter. In fact, Lee was a puritan and dissident intellectual who studied public administration and believed in God throughout his lifetime. Lee employed 'who-what-how' categorization and transcendence ethics (i.e., nonviolence, personal ethic, social ethic, and self-sacrifice) to describe and analyze administrative phenomena. Lee's nonviolence in particular plays a key role in his framework of transcendence ethics and is used in unique ways. His nonviolence is (1) not to use violence but to use 'word,' (2) to tell the truth (right things), (3) to tell right things only, (4) to use complete nonviolence, and (5) grounded in laws, common sense, and agreements. Nonviolence will be a likely option for those who do not have strong power and must address an evil counterpart. Citizens' rational resistance and nonviolence will protect themselves from and correct the power abuse of evil regimes. However, the weak must persevere against the violence of the strong and wait patiently on the long road from nonviolence to self-sacrifice. Accordingly, it is not easy to practice Lee's framework of transcendence ethics in reality. Nevertheless, his transcendence ethics, nonviolence in particular, appear to provide practical and realistic guidance for public administration reform.*

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## INTRODUCTION

When professor Moon–Young Lee passed away in January 2014, most newspapers and mass media described him in his obituary as a “pro–democracy fighter” rather than a dissident public administration scholar and an elder of a holiness church. In fact, he was forcibly dismissed and reinstated three times and even imprisoned three times for a total of 10 years, approximately one–third of his academic career (1959–1992) in Korea University (Lee 2008: 244–245). Consequently, he could neither supervise many graduate students nor have many academic books and papers published before his last reinstatement in 1984. His Autobiographic Public Administration (1991), which provided an analytic archetype to later books (Lee 2008: 483, 525), was published only a year before his retirement.

Lee was a public administration scholar, of course. He served as a vice president (1969–1970) and the 9th president (1971–1972) of the Korean Association for Public Administration (KAPA), although only a few remember this fact. After his retirement in 1992, he energetically published a series of books about ‘minimal conditions of public administration.’ The series included *The Analects of Confucius, the Works of Mencius, and Public Administration* (1996), *Man, Religion, and State: American Public Administration, Puritanism, and Martin Luther’s 95 Theses* (2001), *Cooperative Governance: Wonhyo, Yulgok, Ham Seok–heon, and Kim Gu* (2006), and *Public Administration from the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement Perspective* (2011). In particular, Lee (1996), above, brought him the KAPA award for excellence in an academic book in 1997. Nevertheless, his academic effort for public administration appears to be less appreciated, if not veiled or neglected, than it deserves to be.

Is his image of pro–democracy fighter well–grounded and reasonable? What is his theory of public administration? Does his theory have conceptual rigor and practical values? How does it work? What is his contribution to public administration? Despite the existence of Lee’s major works, most scholars and practitioners appear to have difficulty understanding his theory and main concepts correctly. His theoretical framework is based upon his unique experience in the pro–democracy movement, careful perusal of Christian Bibles, and study of public administration and oriental classics such as *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Works of Mencius*. The other reason for its abstruseness is that Lee often used subtly nuanced terminologies of key concepts (e.g., nonviolence) that are different from their usual usages.

This literature–based study reviews Lee’s major books and searches for the core concepts of his theory. Specifically, the framework of “who–what–how” and transcendence ethics (i.e., nonviolence, personal ethic, social ethic, and self–sacrifice) is examined to highlight Lee’s theory of democratic public administration and thus rehabilitate his image from a pro–democracy fighter to a dissident public administration scholar. The next section shows that his images as a fighter, radical left–winger, and/or liberalist are misbranded. Sections three and four explain “who–what–how” categorization and transcendence ethics, respectively. Then, the meanings and rationales of Lee’s nonviolence are discussed in detail in section five. This paper concludes that Lee is a dissident public administration scholar and Korean Puritan and that his nonviolence and other transcendence ethics are not idealistic doctrines but rather have realistic and practical values in public administration.

## DISSIDENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SCHOLAR

Lee appears to be unfairly stigmatized on purpose as a pro–democracy fighter, liberal idealist, and/or only eccentric person who pursued a utopia through continuous violent struggles against autocratic regimes and kept doing odd and useless things for his heroism and political gain. Occasionally, he was known as a radical left–winger, pro–communist, and even commie to those who were misinformed about politics and democracy. His neighbors often thought mistakenly that Lee came from Jeolla Province only because he has continuously sided with the 15th President Kim Dae–jung and Jeolla residents who have been persecuted by military authoritarian regimes (Lee 2008: 373).

Moon–Young Lee was, of course, a pro–democracy fighter (Lee 2008: 345) who resisted authoritarian regimes. He was, however, not an irresponsible idealist but rather a realistic idealist who considered reality thoroughly in advance (Lee 1980: 370; Lee 1986: 138). Thus, Lee rather preferred to be called a *dissident intellectual* (p.318 and 367), who told the truth and sacrificed himself for democracy, and a *Glorious Revolutionist* (p. 347), who wanted to make change without bloody violence. He rarely used violence; he hated radical actions taken by the weak and the strong (Lee 1986: 81–82, 297; Lee 2008: 68–69, 576–578). Instead, Lee (1986: 291–292) always suggested that the weak use nonviolence even when they were purposively induced to use violence by the strong. His nonviolence is to use ‘word’ and tell the truth (right things) that even the strong cannot dare refuse (Lee 2001: 187–189; Lee 2008: 66).

Lee was a *minimalist* who stubbornly adhered to the unalienable minimum (Lee 2008: 150, 481, 681). He only tried to get citizens’ voice heard using ‘word’ and preserve basic human rights (minimum). His struggle did not aim for political gain but for transforming the abnormal circumstance that prevented him from concentrating on research in public administration (Lee 1991: 26; Lee 1996: 55–56; Lee 2008: 333). Although Lee was offered political positions (i.e., party leader and assemblyman), he never took them (Lee 1991: 362; Lee 2008: 213, 317, 379, 553). A real pro–democracy movement, according to Lee (2008: 491, 615), is to make a minimal request that even evil regimes dare not rebuff and then eagerly pay the expensive price for telling the truth.

Contrary to the misbranded images, Lee identified himself as a *capitalist* who respected the core principles of modern civil law: freedom of contract and absolute ownership of private property (Lee 2008: 215–219, 543). He was a CPA and taught government accounting, public budgeting and finance, and public administration philosophy at Korea University. He never believed in materialism and socialism because men, he thought, should go beyond materials. Instead, he believed in spiritual meditation and God (Lee 2008: 500). Lee was not a left–winger at all, but his political ideology was *conservative* (right wing), which is very close to moderate (in fact, conservative moderate) because he sided with the weak and respected property rights and traditional values (p. 500, 528, 665).

Finally, Lee was a ‘*Korean puritan*’ who always repented, lived a hard–working and frugal life, loved his neighbors, prayed to God, and sacrificed himself for Korean democracy (Lee 2008: 264, 509–511). He was never an odd person but a gentleman who wanted to live an ordinary life and enjoy human rights, along with his neighbors. Lee attended Central Holiness Church (formerly Mookyodong Holiness Church) for more than 80 years, having served as an elder since 1974. He was a so–called Christian right–winger and dissident scholar who told the truth to the weak and the strong.

## WHO–WHAT–HOW CATEGORIZATION

Lee has used two analytic lenses that are closely related to one another: ‘who–what–how’ categorization and transcendence ethics. Since his *Public Administration* (1962), Lee has employed the ‘who–what–how’ or ‘people–work–method’ categorization to define public administration and analyze social phenomena (Lee 1991: 35). Lee (1980: 7–8) suggested three objectives of administrative reform: (1) formation of a favorable environment in which government workers in charge perform their tasks autonomously and confidently (people), (2) administrative effectiveness when performing what citizens want government to do (work), and (3) administrative efficiency to minimize labor forces and materials (method).

The ‘who’ dimension asks how people in charge are viewed and treated in an organization (Lee 1986: 319). Civil servants should be independent, active, and social men who have their own character, discretion, and autonomy (Lee 1980: 363–364). They must be noble beings with specialized knowledge and skills and refuse servile obedience to their superiors and organizations (Lee 2001: 496). A public employee is treated as a means without character in authoritarian and bureaucratic regimes, but he or she is considered an end with autonomy and natural rights in democratic public administrations (Lee 1991: 58). Unlike yes–men who serve their autocrat, desirable public managers are willing to risk being punished and to make decisions favorable to citizens who suffer from dictatorship (Lee 1980: 7, 363). Accordingly, self–sacrifice is the highest value of human beings (Lee 1986: 319; Lee 1991: 49).

‘What’ asks what is the *meaningful work* that people must do (Lee 1986: 319); this question is about effectiveness. Government must serve citizens by improving basic human rights and doing what they request (e.g., social welfare, justice, and equity) (Lee 1980: 7; Lee 1991: 136). It is not meaningful for civil servants to simply perform tyranny’s order (e.g., constructing huge bridges and buildings) and pursue unconscionable benefit in return for obedience (Lee 2001: 496). A meaningful work is to side with victims of power abuse (Lee 1986: 319).

Finally, ‘how’ or *method* asks how efficiently people must work (Lee 1986: 319). Government should save resources and money (economic efficiency) and minimize effort by obtaining agreement among stakeholders (social efficiency) (Lee 1980: 6; Lee 1991: 35–36, 40; Lee 1996: 306; Lee 2001: 239). Civil servants must develop their professional knowledge and skills, improve human relationships to obtain cooperation from colleagues, and serve citizens rather than subject themselves to superiors and look down on citizens (Lee 2001: 496). Nonviolence and clean–living life are examples of good ways of doing business (Lee 1986: 320).

This who–what–how categorization starts from ‘how’ (method) and develops to ‘what’ (work) and then ‘who’ (people) (Lee 1991: 48–49). This categorization is too general to be Lee’s unique framework, which rather comes from transcendence ethics.

## TRANSCENDENCE ETHICS

Lee’s framework of transcendence ethics consists of nonviolence, personal ethic, social ethic, and self–sacrifice (Lee 1980: 365; Lee 1991: 49). Nonviolence and personal ethic falls in the ‘how’ category (method), whereas social ethics and self–sacrifice correspond to ‘what’ and ‘who,’ respectively (Lee 1991: 49; Lee 1996: 303, 406).

## Four Gospels and Transcendence Ethics

Lee's transcendence ethics originate from the Four Gospels (i.e., rebirth, holiness, healing, and second coming) of the Holiness Church (Lee 1991: 32; Lee 1996: 302; Lee 2001: 254–259; Lee 2008: 101–102, 269). For instance, nonviolence corresponds to healing in the sense that avoidance of violence (e.g., liquor and tobacco) is a starting point to heal disease and maintain health; personal ethic, social ethic, and self-sacrifice are matched to holiness, second coming, and rebirth, respectively (Lee 1996: 302; Lee 2001: 254; Lee 2008: 269). Lee has a habit of reflecting his pro-democracy struggles from the Christian Bible's standpoint (Lee 1986: 339). Hence, the transcendence ethics are products of applying the Four Gospels to his secular daily life (Lee 2008: 254). Similarly, he employed five basic human natures (五常) in Confucianism and matched trust, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge to transcendence ethics (Lee 1996: 302, 325, 403–406; Lee 2011: 114–115). Lee argues that four ethics are found in the Epistle to the Romans 12:1–21, Epistle of James 5:7–11, and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Lee 1991: 113–115; Lee 2001: 255–258; Lee 2008: 270).

Why did Lee think that the four ethics are transcendent rather than evolutionary? Lee employed an analogy of a tree's growth during four seasons to describe men's maturity processes (Lee 1991: 32; Lee 2011: 114–115). New buds and leaves of a tree should sprout very cautiously in spring; otherwise, they can hardly survive, if not frozen to death. The tree grows and flourishes during summer and then bears its fruits in autumn. The tree stops growing and drops its leaves for itself and its descendants in winter; otherwise, it will be painful to endure biting winds.<sup>5)</sup> People develop their characters in the same order to reach their maturity (Lee 1991: 32). His struggle for democracy has been refined in the process of transcending nonviolence toward self-sacrifice (Lee 1991: 27, 32). It appears that Lee wanted to describe this leap in development as transcendence.

Transcendence ethics represent not only maturity processes but also normative *ethics* (Lee 1980: 365; Lee 1991: 27; 2001: 148–149; Lee 2008: 65, 143) or *abilities* (Lee 1980: 373) that the weak (i.e., ordinary citizens and civil servants) must have to confront the strong. In addition, Lee used these ethics to describe phenomena and behaviors; that is, transcendence ethics are both normative and positive (descriptive) in Lee's works. More importantly, his transcendence ethics are *response strategies* or alternatives (solutions to problems) that the weak must adopt to overcome power abuse by the strong (Lee 1980: 365; Lee 2001: 87; 2008: 268). Finally, Lee considered transcendence ethics the *antitheses* of Hegelian dialectics to reach synthesis (1991: 30); for instance, nonviolence (antithesis) enables the weak to overcome violence (thesis) and reach rationalism or rational governance (synthesis) (Lee 1991: 30, 118). Transcendence ethics, when used in maturity processes and normative ethics, appear to have an order from nonviolence to self-sacrifice but do not have such an order in response strategies and antitheses.

## Four Transcendence Ethics

The first transcendence ethic is *nonviolence*, that is, to forgo using any violence and use 'word' instead (Lee 1980: 365; Lee 1986: 294; Lee 1996: 56). Nonviolence is an action to talk and only tell right things (Lee 1986: 294–295; Lee 1996: 56). Nonviolence is not a submissive action but an active one to tell the truth and facts. Nonviolence, however, does not mean lack of authority but

5) When officiating a wedding ceremony, Lee gave the bride the following lessons: (1) love your husband only (avoid committing adultery) in spring, (2) work hard to pay taxes and have many children in summer, (3) share your achievement (harvest) with neighbors in fall, and (4) give up all you have eventually.



rather relevant execution of legitimate power in accordance with laws (Lee 1991: 138–139). This nature is called trust (信); it manifests the feeling of giving trust by being located at the great mean and thus glowing brightly (光名之心). People with trust do not break their word, and their behaviors remain same and consistent; Lee calls these features nonviolence (Lee 2008: 143; Lee 2011: 114–115). When subjected to despotic violence, the weak need confidence that nonviolence is the right answer to brutal violence (Lee 1980: 365).

The second virtue is *personal ethic*, whose concept has evolved overtime. At this stage, people comply with agreements among individuals (Lee 1980: 365). Then, personal ethic was refined to be obtaining specialized knowledge and skills and making and sticking with agreements (Lee 1991: 49, 140–150; Lee 1996: 404). In *The Analects of Confucius, the Works of Mencius, and Public Administration* (1996), Lee specifically added emphasizing self-discipline when obtaining specialized knowledge, respecting neighbors (parents) to whom you are indebted, complying with rules (laws), pursuing harmony and cooperation, being soft on colleagues and hard on himself, and building trust among superiors and subordinates (pp. 306–309, 424–431). In *Man, Religion, and State* (2001), he draws lessons from *Aesop's Fables* and describes personal ethic as (1) knowing the logic of things (格物致知) (knowing things, safe places, and his enemy), (2) having sincerity and right mind (誠意正心) (doing it yourself, knowing yourself, and not having vain hopes), and (3) respecting agreements (pp. 150–163). He emphasizes the importance of unity and solidarity of colleagues, warning of the temptation of schism (Lee 2008: 381, 403–404, 521–524). Personal ethic needs knowledge (智) and propriety (禮), whose principles are the feeling of approving and disapproving (是非之心) and feeling of modesty and complaisance (辭讓之心), respectively (Lee 1996: 403–404).<sup>6)</sup> Propriety is equivalent to the western concept of tolerance or constitutionalism (Lee 1996: 403). Knowledge and propriety improve rationality and acceptability of the 'word' that

The third maturity stage is *social ethic*. People with nonviolence and personal ethic will side with the weak against the strong (Lee 1980: 365). Social ethic is to improve basic human rights and social values such as democracy, welfare, equity, and justice (Lee 1991: 136). Government should have responsibility for taking care of deprived people and minorities (Lee 1996: 434–435). Accordingly, it is not meaningful to do civil engineering work such as the tower of Babel, which deceives the eyes of ordinary citizens (Lee 1996: 380–383). Social ethic is needed to share the harvest with neighbors to whom you are indebted (those who are oppressed by a dictator). Social ethic is represented by the modern concept of benevolence (仁) (Lee 1996: 405), and this principle corresponds to the feeling of commiseration (惻隱之心).

Finally, *self-sacrifice* is the highest transcendence ethic at which people eagerly eventually sacrifice themselves to save others (Lee 2001: 148). Although suffering from the outrageous violence of the strong, prophets rely upon nonviolence, possess personal and social ethics, and then are victimized without being raised high (Lee 1980: 371; Lee 1991: 309). There are several steps to reach self-sacrifice. People recognize what government ought not to do; they refuse to receive improper benefit from evil regimes; they are alienated and even killed due to their declining the improper offer; they become delighted despite their sacrifice; and eventually, the rules, which they strived to comply with, are widely perceived as principles of saving the wicked world (Lee 1996: 437–444)<sup>7)</sup>. Lee describes self-sacrifice as the principle of righteousness (義) that is matched to the feeling of shame and dislike (羞惡之心). Table 1 summarizes relationships among who–what–how categorization, transcendence ethics, the Four Gospels, and the five human

6) This section employs Legge's translation for knowledge, propriety, benevolence, and righteousness in Mencius (1970: 202–203).

7) Gandhi (1983) notes, "It is the reformer who is anxious for the reform, and not society, from which he should expect nothing better than opposition, abhorrence and even mortal persecution" (p. 190).

natures in Confucianism.

**Table 1. Who–what–how categorization and transcendence ethics**

Category	Value or goal	Trans. ethics	Four Gospels	Human natures	Season
'How' (Method)	Efficiency	Nonviolence	Healing(神癒)	Trust(信)	Spring
		Personal ethic	Holiness(聖潔)	Knowledge(智), propriety(禮)	Summer
'What' (Work)	Effectiveness	Social ethic	Second coming(再臨)	Benevolence(仁)	Autumn
'Who' (People)	Autonomy	Self-sacrifice	Rebirth(重生)	Righteousness(義)	Winter

Source: Lee (1980, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2008)

## Applications of Transcendence Ethics

Lee illustrates how transcendence ethics are applied to public organization, policy, finance, and human resource management (Lee 1991, 1996, 2001). For instance, nonviolence in human resource management constitutes refusing a spoils system and recruiting civil servants with propriety (禮); government implementing scientific human resource management and improving human relations (personal ethic); government inviting alienated and/or disenfranchised citizens and not discriminating against gender, race, education, disability, and others (social ethic) as shown in the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Act; and finally, government allowing a civil servants' labor union to make collective agreements and to have dissenting opinions (self-sacrifice) (Lee 1991: 229–255; Lee 1996: 563–601; Lee 2001: 419–431). A labor union must (1) avoid improper labor activities that only agitate employers (nonviolence); (2) comply with its collective labor agreement (personal ethic); (3) remain as a union for employees rather than for employers or outsiders (social ethic); and (4) focus on labor–management relations instead of class struggle (self-sacrifice) (Lee 1991: 28–29; Lee 1996: 667–668; Lee 2001: 346–354; Lee 2008: 242–244). Civil servants are expected to abstain from power abuse (nonviolence), comply with rules and procedures (personal ethic), accept what citizens want (e.g., human rights, welfare, and justice), and respect citizens' requests rather than the orders of their superiors (self-sacrifice) (Lee 1991: 28–29; 1996: 667–668).

Like the 'who–what–how' categorization, transcendence ethics develop from nonviolence up to self-sacrifice in order. Unlike the 'people–work–method' dimension, transcendence ethics are cumulative rather than mutually exclusive. For example, self-sacrifice includes nonviolence, personal ethic, social ethic, and its own features (Lee 2001: 88). Hence, nonviolence and personal ethic are relatively easier to reach than the social ethic and self-sacrifice. Nonviolence in particular plays a key role in Lee's transcendence ethics. The next section zooms in on the concept and values of Lee's nonviolence.

## LEE'S NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolence is a prior condition of other transcendence ethics (Lee 1996: 403–404, 419). Lee often cited *Aesop's Fables* and Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in connection with transcendence ethics and found that the former include only nonviolence and personal ethic, whereas the latter has all four ethics (Lee 2001: 134, 149; Lee 2008: 560). *Aesop's Fables* illustrates that the weak escape from the strong, obtain knowledge and wisdom, or unite themselves to survive under tyranny (Lee 1980: 366). In an adverse circumstance, it is difficult for the weak to implement even nonviolence and personal ethic, social ethic, and self-sacrifice stages will be too high to reach.

Lee's nonviolence is the core concept of his framework of public administration reform. It is rooted from his humanism and minimalism and influenced by Gandhi (Lee 1986: 97; Lee 1991: 17). Lee uses nonviolence in a unique way; his nonviolence is slightly different from other concepts of nonviolence. His nonviolence is not only the antonym of violence but has following features.

## What Is Lee's Nonviolence?

First, Lee's nonviolence is *not to use any violence* but to use 'word' instead (Lee 1986: 290; Lee 1996: 56; Lee 2001: 246; Lee 2008: 95). Violence here means actual or threatened, physical or non-physical, verbal or non-verbal, and any other forms of violence that limit and suppress citizens' freewill. When the strong use violence, the weak should not use any violence; even when the strong induce the weak to use violence, the weak should not be tricked into appealing to violence (Lee 1986: 289, 291; Lee 2001: 246; Lee 2008: 68–69). 'Word' comes into play after violence stops (Lee 1991: 118; Lee 1996: 404). The final product of 'word' is such an agreement as contract and law (Lee 1980: 357; Lee 1986: 305). Hence, the antonym of violence is use of 'word' rather than nonviolence (Lee 1986: 290; Lee 1996: 404; Lee 2001: 105, 246); the antonym of 'word' is not silence but violence (Lee 2001: 189). Lee differentiates Korean pro-democracy fighters in the 1970s and 1980s from dissidents in Africa and South America. Korean dissidents refused to use violence; they did not remain obedient to the strong but instead sided with victims of power abuse; they were not corrupt; and finally, they eagerly sacrificed themselves with a raging thirst to dole out all they had, whereas their counterpart was obsessed with a ceaseless desire for wealth and power (Lee 1986: 318–319, 344).

Second, nonviolence is to *tell right things* or the truth (Lee 1986: 290; Lee 1996: 56; Lee 2008: 497). The truth here means nonviolent resistance against evil regimes (Lee 2008: 580). The weak should make an offer that even evil regimes cannot refuse because it is completely right and legitimate (Lee 2008: 66, 80, 435, 491, 497, 615). Nonviolence is different from nonresistance or silence (doing nothing) because it is a discreet struggle to tell the truth under brutal dictatorship (Lee 1986: 294–295). Accordingly, nonviolence is neither submissive nor passive (Lee 1991:19) but active and righteous action to improve the decency of the weak (Lee 2001: 149). The weak ought not to tell a lie and make absurd requests; otherwise, they will be counter-attacked by their merciless counterpart. Therefore, the antonym of the truth and peace is violence (Lee 1986: 242, 298; Lee 2001: 187; Lee 2008: 580) and nonviolence is equivalent to the truth and the right 'word' (Lee 2008: 580)<sup>8</sup>.

In addition, Lee's nonviolence should be *complete* so that it excludes even subtle verbal, emotional, and/or psychological violence (Lee 2001: 149). Incomplete and half-baked nonviolence may provoke the strong to aggravate the lopsided conflict further (Lee 2008: 59). The more the strong rely on violence, the more the weak should stay with absolute and thorough nonviolence, even when they become angry over the dictator's cruelty (Lee 1986: 289; Lee 2008: 59). Lee emphasized that ordinary people ought never to do 'what they ought not to do' in any circumstance and should endure up to the last minute (Lee 1986: 292, 298). For example, the weak should adjust conversational tone (e.g., intonation and accentuation) and attitude properly to make 'plain speaking' as if they read a textbook. This plain speaking should be succinct and imperative without any unnecessary or emotional component. However, it is not easy to remain patient and calm in such an adverse circumstance. Hence, perseverance is the synonym of

8) Gandhi's *satyagraha* (truth-force) is to replace violent movement with one based entirely upon Truth (God), and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) is the only way to find Truth (Bondurant 1988: 15–18).



nonviolence because persevering is eventually reified into a virtue of nonviolence (Lee 1986: 335–336).

Fourth, Lee's nonviolence is to tell right things *minimally* (Lee 1991: 25–26; Lee 1996: 56; Lee 2001: 263; Lee 2008: 491). This strategy directs the imperative minimum action at the risk of being damaged in a feared situation (Lee 1991: 25). Nonviolence is the minimum to which people must adhere to move forward toward self-sacrifice (Lee 2008: 65) and is associated more with 'not to do what they ought not to' (e.g., not to misuse power) rather than 'to do what they ought to' (Lee 1996: 404). One day, he drew a cone with a round base at the bottom ( $\Delta$ ) and another upside down ( $\nabla$ ) on the blackboard. He then asked, "Which one do you think is more painful when someone puts it on your hand?" The weak must concentrate on the most essential and fundamental issue without raising unnecessary issues or asking too much.<sup>9)</sup> The minimal action of nonviolence will strengthen the weak and protect them from a dictator's counter-attack. Hence, the weak should remain patient, calm, rational, and discreet all of the time<sup>10)</sup>.

Finally, nonviolence is grounded in natural laws, common sense, formal laws and procedures, agreements, and so forth. Rules represent common sense expressed in words (Lee 1986: 242; Lee 1991: 351). An exemplar is Socrates, who complied with even unfair laws and died (Lee 1986: 289). It is considered violent, for instance, to break a word, to eat lunch too early or too late, to drink liquor too much, to commit adultery, to organize an unconscionable labor movement, or to employ a spoils system.<sup>11)</sup> Doing 'what you ought not to do' is worse than not doing 'what you ought to' (Lee 1996: 420). Hence, Lee's nonviolence differs from Gandhi's civil disobedience, which violates unfair laws voluntarily at the risk of being punished.

## Why Nonviolence?

Then, why must the weak rely upon nonviolence? What are the values of Lee's nonviolence? Most of all, it is because the weak, by definition, do not have power to use violence against the tyrant who has strong weapons and violence (Lee 2001: 88, 148)<sup>12)</sup>. Lee (2001) says, "The strong disguises himself, the weak shows himself as he is. The strong use cunning words, but the weak realize the correct logic of things. The strong break even promises that they made the weak, while the weak respect agreements" (p. 148). The weak in this circumstance have two response options other than obedience: violence and nonviolence.

Second, the weak will be worse off from the use of violence. Ordinary people easily react back to the dictator emotionally and violently. The violence of the weak is likely to simply release their enmity and thus bring a radical and severe reaction of the strong (Lee 1986: 297). Insidious rulers often induce careless people to use violence to obtain a chance to unite themselves, quell emotion-releasing violence, and thus consolidate their regimes (Lee 1986: 291, 297). Emphasizing nonviolence and tolerance, Lee argued that the key sentence of The Work of Mencius is, "For them, when they cannot enjoy themselves, to condemn their superiors is wrong, but when the

9) This minimalism allows the weak to minimize mistakes that the strong are waiting for to retaliate against and to concentrate on the spirit of the times such as basic human rights without unnecessary ideological conflicts over less important issues (Lee 1991: 330–331).

10) "Experience has taught me that civility is the most difficult part of Satyagraha. Civility does not here mean the mere outward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good" (Gandhi 1983: 394).

11) When Saemaul Song, written by autocratic President Park Chung-hee, blared out in an early morning in prison, Lee yelled, "Knock off that Park Chung-hee's song!" in protest of the agent's breaking his word (Lee 1991: 352–353). "How dare you call it Park's song rather than President Park's song?" teased the intelligence agent. Lee simply replied, "Then do you refer to Mr. Schubert's song rather than just Schubert's song?" He wants to stay with agreements and common sense.

12) "But sword we had none, We scarcely had the nerve and the muscle even to receive sword-cut" (Gandhi 1983: 223).

superiors of the people do not make enjoyment a thing common to the people and themselves, they also do wrong” (Mencius 1970: 157–158). Lee hated both power abuse by the strong and indiscrete violence of the weak (Lee 1986: 81–82; Lee 2008: 79).

Third, the weak can survive by sticking to nonviolence. Nonviolent resistance is not to do nothing and be beaten (Lee 1986: 294; Lee 1991: 118) but to tell the right things and make their voice heard to the strong. This nonviolence, despite its conceptual and practical difficulties, is a rational strategy that protects the weak and their neighbors from dictator’s violent retaliation. Suppose riot policemen block the entrance of a college to discourage outsiders from participating in a scheduled demonstration. Most students of the college may become upset at such violence. However, discreet students will pretend to be obedient and show their student ID cards without remonstrating with policemen because they do not have physical power to kick out policemen. Such passive behavior will lead to loose ID checking and thus increase the likelihood that outsiders take part in the gathering. Violent protest and resistance, by contrast, will drive policemen to check student ID strictly. This example shows that nonviolence is not only an idealistic strategy but also a rational and practical one for the weak. Nonviolence of the weak plays roles in protecting themselves from oppression by the strong and correcting tyranny (Lee 1991: 28).

Fourth, nonviolence is the strong weapon of the weak to defeat the strong and eventually to build peace after the collapse of the dictatorship (Lee 1986: 297–298). Nonviolence not only strengthens the morality and legitimacy of the weak but also highlights the dictator’s illegitimacy, brutality, and injustice. As the legitimacy gap between the weak and strong widens, the weak are likely to obtain strong support from their neighbors, whereas the dictator’s power will wane rapidly. Because the strong know that they are doing wrong and absurd things, they do not fear violence. However, they do fear right ‘word’ and truth; they like violent citizens who simply release enmity but hate prudent citizens who stay with nonviolence.

The final rationale is normative. Lee’s nonviolence appears to be deeply rooted from his philosophical belief in the human natures of Confucianism, religious life in Christianity, and experiences as a pro–democracy fighter. Lee identifies himself as a minimalist who tried to preserve the minimum of ordinary human life (Lee 2008: 150, 481). Only minimalists who have been deprived of their minimum and experienced miserable situations are able to have adoration for basic human natures instead of animosity toward the strong and to wish that the same minimum should be given to those who stole their minimum (Lee 1986: 96)<sup>13</sup>. A prisoner could not bear to catch irritating flies on the wall because he knew how painful it would be to be beaten (Lee 1986: 300). Even when an intelligence agent tortured a victim, he or she sympathized with the agent and believed that the agent also had the same human natures that he or she had (Lee 2008: 438).

## PROPOSITIONS OF TRANSCENDENCE ETHICS

How do Lee’s transcendence ethics work? They are not only normative principles or doctrines. These ethics have logics through which the weak protect themselves and then overcome the arbitrary violence of the strong. The logics of transcendence ethics are inferred from the following propositions that Lee implicitly and explicitly made here and there in his books.

First, there is a minimum that should be given to everyone for his ordinary life. The minimum includes basic needs (e.g., materials, clothing, food, shelter, job, education, and affection) and human rights that are indispensable for a minimum level of human life (Lee 1986: 95)<sup>14</sup>. For

13) “I have no anger against them. I am only sorry for their ignorance and their narrowness” (Gandhi 1983: 166).

14) In general, people are assumed to have the five human natures of trust, commiseration, righteousness, propriety and knowledge,

instance, a sip of warm water is the minimum that should be provided to a prisoner in cold weather (Lee 1991: 351; Lee 2008: 303). Accordingly, a request for this minimum is not negotiable but taken for granted as though it is the truth; even a dictator cannot dare rebuff this request (Lee 2008: 66, 497). Dissident scholars take minimal actions of requesting basic human rights under a dictatorship and then return to their work without pursuing political gain (Lee 1991: 25–26; Lee 1996: 56). Government is responsible for providing at least such minimums (恒産) to citizens, who have their own rights to replace an evil regime with a new one (Lee 2001: 284). Nonviolence is the minimum to which people must adhere before transcending toward personal ethic, social ethic, and self-sacrifice (Lee 2008: 65).

Second, all evil things come from the top (i.e., illegitimate regimes and bureaucracy) (Lee 1991: 42; Lee 2008: 268, 589) and citizens learn bad practices of evil regimes (Lee 1991: 29). This proposition implies that (1) government by its nature is not likely to do good jobs voluntarily and (2) citizens will be spoiled by authoritarian regimes. Illegitimate government will become increasingly worse unless controlled properly, reaching organizational hypertrophy.

Third, all good things come out of the bottom (i.e., citizens) (Lee 1980: 350; Lee 1991: 42) and government learns citizens' good practices (Lee 1991: 29). This proposition reflects the fact that the sovereignty of a county is given to citizens (constituents) as opposed to politicians and bureaucrats. The implications of this proposition are (1) governmental bureaucracy does not have the ability to correct itself when it goes wrong and (2) citizens must check and correct government by telling what they want (Lee 2008: 59, 65). However, evil regimes rarely listen to the citizens' voice or respond to it appropriately.

Fourth, authoritarian regimes without legitimacy collapse by themselves (Lee 1986: 289, 297; Lee 2008: 346–347). Due to the lack of legitimacy, they rely more upon violence than upon rationality. When existing rules do not work, they use more violence and make their own rules arbitrarily to suppress citizens (Lee 1986: 340). They keep resorting to violence and ignore even rules that they made; their social efficiency declines, and maintenance cost increases. This vicious circle eventually leads to organizational hypertrophy and collapse. The strong tend to be overconfident of their naked power and are less likely to expect nonviolent reaction from the weak; accordingly, they become embarrassed and upset and then keep using violence. Illegitimate regimes appear to be strong due to their violence, but they are not in fact so strong (Lee 1986: 297).

Finally, nonviolence is the dominant strategy that the weak must take (Lee 1986: 297). Nonviolence is not to be obedient or remain silent but to tell the truth (Lee 1986: 294–295; Lee 1991: 118). Violence is not citizens' alternative to evil's violence (Lee 1986: 290). Even when the weak are induced by the strong to use violence, they must overcome the temptation of violent response (Lee 1986: 289, 291). They must only tell the right things that even evil regimes cannot dare rebuff (Lee 2008: 66, 497). This response is citizens' rational resistance (Lee 1991: 30). Violent reactions are often to release enmity to the strong, who are seeking a chance to counter-attack with more-severe violence (Lee 1986: 297). As evil regimes resort to more-brutal violence, citizens should adhere to more-complete nonviolence and moral standards. Both dictator's naked power and imprudent violence of the weak should be avoided (Lee 1986: 81).

## PERSEVERANCE AND TRANSCENDENCE ETHICS

The use of transcendence ethics, nonviolence in particular, is the promising alternative to violent responses. However, it is not easy to use them in practice, although the weak know the potential

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although degrees of these natures vary across individuals.

of this peaceful and rational strategy. It is not because the logics of transcendence ethics are too complicated to understand, but because implementation of the nonviolent strategy involves risk-taking and requires spiritual maturity of the weak. The weak must endure the violence of the strong, believing that they also have the minimum level of human natures. Hence, Lee kept emphasizing the perseverance and ethical life of the weak (ordinary citizens) (Lee 1980: 384; Lee 1986: 298, 335; Lee 1991: 114; Lee 1996: 664; Lee 2001: 204, 348; Lee 2008: 202).

Lee argued that the best means for the poor to overcome the sins of the rich is, in a word, *perseverance* (Lee 2001: 48). “Abstinence [perseverance] is not lethargy but the power to wait, power to grow, and power that is stronger than violence” (Lee 1991: 19). The weak must persevere with violence and endure the long road to transcend from nonviolence to self-sacrifice (Lee 2001: 348–349). This journey of perseverance starts with not blaming each other and behaving prudently (p. 349). The weak must tenaciously endure a dictator’s violence for a long time (Lee 2001: 204); they should persevere to the last minute (Lee 1986: 298; Lee 2001: 350; Lee 2008: 202). Those who can build peace are neither the strong nor the radical activists but rather the weak who endure hardship and use nonviolence (Lee 1986: 289–290)<sup>15</sup>. Lee (1980: 384) recapitulates that perseverance includes all virtues that the weak should equip with and that it is the tip of nonviolent culture.

The weak must recognize reality and then wait cautiously until a right condition becomes ripe. The spirit of social movements is not only idealism but rather ‘realistic idealism’ (Lee 1986: 138). The weak must have a thorough and rigorous understanding of the real world (Lee 1986: 298). It is also important to wait and catch the right moment to take a minimum action. The effectiveness of transcendence ethics, say nonviolence, will be maximized when the weak tell the truth (minimum action) in the most feared situation (right moment). As Mencius (1970: 157–158) warns, the weak should avoid excessive requests and arbitrary release of their emotion.

The weak must stay with complete nonviolence and morality; they should keep telling the right things (Lee 2001: 246). As the strong exert more-severe violence, in contrast, the weak should rely entirely upon nonviolence (Lee 1986: 289). Only selfless people who persevere against the violence of the strong can drive out a dictator who tends to pursue, for example, his personal gain and territorial expansion rather than human rights and social welfare (Lee 1996: 436). Transcendence ethics and clean living strengthen the legitimacy and moral power of the weak<sup>16</sup>.

Why should the weak persevere, wait, and adhere to the minimum and moral standards? Why should they be cautious and well prepared before taking actions? It is because they cannot expect fairness, rationality, or justice from the strong, who take arbitrary actions at their convenience. Even a trivial mistake or careless behavior could revitalize the strong, who later would retaliate against the weak. Consequently, any violent and emotion-releasing action should be avoided.

## CONCLUSION

Professor Moon-Young Lee dedicated himself to Korean democratization. However, his images of a pro-democracy fighter and radical left-winger were misbranded and thus hindered people from recognizing him as a public administration scholar. He wanted to call himself a dissident intellectual, capitalist, (moderate) conservative, minimalist, realistic idealist, and puritan. In fact, a puritan and dissident intellectual appears to describe best his frugal daily life, belief in God,

15) Gandhi (1983) explains, “... why it would spell victory for our side if we could maintain perfect peace in spite of any punishment that might be inflicted upon me” (p. 418).

16) “The idea of nonviolence as superior moral power is the key points that Gandhi sought...” (Dalton 2012: 40).

struggles against dictatorship, and study in public administration.

Lee employed the 'who-what-how' or 'people-work-method' categorization and transcendence ethics to analyze public administration. His framework for public administration reform consists of nonviolence, personal ethic, social ethic, and self-sacrifice that are rooted from the Four Gospels of Holiness Church. Nonviolence and personal ethic fall into the 'how' category, whereas social ethic and self-sacrifice correspond to 'what' and 'who' dimensions, respectively.

The core virtue is nonviolence, which precedes other transcendence ethics. Nonviolence is (1) not to use violence but to use 'word'; (2) to tell the truth; (3) to tell right things minimally; (4) to use complete nonviolence; and (5) to be grounded in laws, common sense, and agreements. In a word, nonviolence is a rational and minimum action to tell the truth. The weak by definition do not have power to use violence and thus will be worse off from the use of violence. By adhering to nonviolence, the weak can protect themselves from and correct the cruelty of the strong (Lee 1991: 28). Lee (1991: 30) argues that citizens' rational resistance and perseverance can change evil regimes.

It is not easy for the weak to implement transcendence ethics in the real world. They should have perseverance to endure persecution, courage to tell the truth rightfully, and morality to resist the temptation of violence. Perseverance is needed all of the way from nonviolence through self-sacrifice, although it is conceptually closer to nonviolence. This underlying virtue is neither submissive nor lethargic but stronger than violence (Lee 1991: 19). Despite the difficulty in implementation, Lee's transcendence ethics, nonviolence in particular, are not idealistic but rather realistic and practical. The next study will employ a conflict case in a public organization to examine practical values of transcendence ethics and seek implications for conflict management and managerial leadership.

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