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## Moral Priority of Middle Power in Classical Realism and its Implication in East Asia : A Lesson from Platonic International Thought

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### I.

The rise of middle powers becomes noticeable in the wake of the recent global circumstances. The concept of power is no longer defined by traditional factors such as military capabilities and economic capacity. The concept of power becomes so diversified that even the distinction of soft and hard power cannot embrace the complex nature of power of today. Thus the great powers in traditional sense are not able to control the entire world, while the "less great" powers being able to raise their voices. True, the so-called middle power seems to be increasing their international influence in various issue areas. However, the influence of the middle power is exercised in a limited way and on "less important" areas. In the most of the case, the middle power is merely in the "middle" of increasing its power with the "hidden" ambition to become a great power some day in the future. If it is not the case, the middle power merely realizes that it will never become a great power and thus it tries to search for specific fields such as in the field of technology or in international organizations in which it may demonstrate its "middle" power somewhat efficiently. If this is the case, then, the concept of middle power is a mirage with no essence. The middle power is either an expression of hidden ambition of a would-be great power or self-content illusion of a loser, or, at best, strategic framework of the foreign policies of a non-great power.

This understanding of the middle power concept is largely based on realist perspective: however diversified and complex the power becomes these days, any state seeks after power as much as possible so that it increases national interest. However, if we stand a bit away from this realist perspective, the middle power concept turns out to show its different aspects. "Holding middle" or "taking means" in Aristotelian terms, can be taken as a desirable goal for foreign policies not merely as an unavoidable choice for a less powerful state. I mean that the middle power concept is not merely a reality of a state under given condition but rather a desirable goal for any ordinary state that values the stability and peace of the world without having to exclude national interest. In

other words, the “middlepowermanship” is not sorry choice for a less powerful state. Rather it can be an actively chosen object of an excellent foreign policy that ordinary states should pursue. To support this idea I will turn to Plato’s international thought that emphasizes moderation, “holding middle” in a specific sense.

Above all, Plato’s ideal city as such is an exemplary case of taking middle power concept as a set goal instead of as a given condition. Plato opts for moderate foreign policy not merely because it is morally worthy but more importantly because it is an efficient policy for the sustainability of his ideal city. Basically Platonic ideal city does not divide dimension of morality and that of reality. For Plato, moderation in foreign policies is a virtue and, at the same time, effective means for the sustainability of the ideal city. I will argue that there is a moral-practical priority of pursuing middle power by examining Plato’s arguments for the foreign policies of the ideal city, which combine moral and practical dimensions. In particular I will examine closely Plato’s *Republic*, the well-known text yet scarcely known as a text for foreign policies. Then, I will try to define his teaching as having universal validity in order to apply it to the context of East Asia.

## II.

Is there a coherent international political thought for Plato? A general answer to the question is given in the negative, since Plato seems to assume that his ideal city is so isolated that it is relatively free from constant anxiety of international security. Although Plato appears to be concerned with international affairs including waging war and making foreign policies, his interest in international relations seems to be limited and, at most, subordinate to the principle of domestic politics. However, it is reasonably suspected that Plato, who witnessed the Peloponnesian war and had firsthand experience of the decline of Athenian empire, must have a coherent view to international relations with the seriousness that matches his prominence of political philosophy. As a matter of fact, some Platonic dialogues such as *Alcibiades* and *Menexenus* demonstrate that Plato treats international affairs as if they were influential not only on the formation of regime but also on the formation of soul, both of which are the main subjects of Platonic political philosophy. Thus, I assume that there is a coherent and deliberate international political thought of Plato and, moreover, his international political thought does not separate from but intimately involves main subjects of his political philosophy.

A rough scan of the historical context is enough to make one believe that Plato’s concern of international affairs was inevitable. Born in the middle of the Peloponnesian War (431~403BC), Plato (428~347BC) must have witnessed and have been informed of sufferings of war at his childhood. In his youth he must have had a firsthand experience of political revolutions in Athens, which were

heavily influenced by international circumstances.<sup>1</sup> In his prime time Plato must have been one of the Athenian intellectuals who were anxious about the noticeable decline of Athenian power in the wake of the defeat in the Peloponnesian War. Last but not least, Plato was aware that the life of Socrates, his philosophic mentor, was largely determined by the international turmoil that Athens had had to suffer. Socrates participated in military service and he reported it in the defense speech at the trial. It is reasonably suspected that Socrates' trial had much to do with his relationship with the capable and notorious Athenian general, Alcibiades, who was a former disciple of Socrates and turns out to be a traitor of Athens.

In particular, Plato pays special attention to Socrates' participation in military operation. In Platonic dialogues one can find many places where Socrates' military service is alluded. At first, Plato reports that Socrates considers his military service a sign of courage, a sense of honor and obedience to the rule of law in Athens. However, Plato could not have failed to recognize that Socrates advanced the cause of Athenian imperialism that obviously did harm to "innocent" foreign cities and people. Here the issue of justice is brought in. Could even Socrates, who is supposedly an incarnation of justice, commit injustice beyond the limit of polis? Is this contradiction inevitable or even necessary? How did Plato deal with this problem of apparent disagreement between justice from within and justice from without?

According to the traditional interpretation of Plato, he seems to avoid this problem by isolating the ideal city from the international context and confining the principle of justice to the domestic realm. This interpretation gives a strong impression that Plato is either a naïve idealist, who would believe that isolation is easily achieved even in the adverse international circumstances, or a straightforward realist, who would ignore justice completely in the international realm: ideal city had better stay isolated in order to remain just; if it is not allowed, however, it should go fight against foreign enemies without having to concern about justice. Contrary to the traditional understanding of Plato's international thought, I will argue that Plato's *Republic*, the most comprehensive discussion of justice, rejects both isolationist and realist solutions to the disagreement of justice from within and that from without: Plato construes a theory of justice, which validates the consistency of justice from within and from without. I will also argue that Plato's attempt to make such consistent argument for justice is not merely for dealing reluctantly with international issue but more importantly for completing his political philosophy of justice that proves to be valid in both domestic and international realms. In other words, Plato's international political

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<sup>1</sup> In the course of the Peloponnesian War there was an oligarchic coup in 411 BC, which resulted in the short-lived rule of "The Four Hundred." Meanwhile, at the Athenians' defeat, Sparta established a puppet government by supporting an oligarchic coup in 403 BC.

thought is not peripheral but essential to Plato's political philosophy, which presumably deals with best regime and best life.

### III.

As a matter of fact, it is often believed that classical political philosophers in general prefer foreign policies inclining toward disengagement and even isolation.<sup>2</sup> Along the same line is placed the ideal city of Plato's *Republic*, as if it could ignore or, at least, marginalize the issue of international conflict. However, one can hardly believe that Plato was completely unaware of Hobbesian anxiety that any individual city, no matter whether it is just or not, should be anxious about external threat if there were no common authority that guarantees the security of innocent cities. As is well known, a large proportion of Plato's *Republic* is occupied by the discussion of educating the guardians of the ideal city. Although the educational program for the guardians is largely focused on taming them in order not to abuse their power toward fellow citizens, one cannot ignore a simple fact that *raison d'être* of the guardians is to defend the city from external threat. Even a casual reader cannot fail to notice that the right conditioning of the guardians of the ideal city constitutes the backbone of Plato's movement towards ideal city and in the course of it the necessity of responsible guardians arise from the very international context. The very existence of the guardians indicates Plato's consciousness that his ideal city is inevitably involved in the international conflict. The ideal city could not be located in an international vacuum.

Given this condition, disengagement and isolation cannot be an option for the ideal city. Moreover, there is a compelling reason why the ideal city can hardly shun from international conflict. It is because the foundation of the ideal city itself is originated in expansion and, more directly speaking, aggression towards the neighboring cities with no legitimate cause. As a matter of fact, the ideal city itself incites international conflict. In the beginning of establishing the ideal city does lurk the fundamental problem that the people in the ideal city cannot be satisfied with lives of "pigs."<sup>3</sup> In other words, the ideal city requires more than minimum necessities for living. Thus, it seeks after proper amount of wealth which may allow for rather luxurious life. The pursuit of wealth necessitates expansion of territory and inevitably arouse international conflicts. From this perspective, Socrates in the *Republic*, while he establishes the ideal city, declares the origin of war. He says: "the

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<sup>2</sup> Ex. Plato, *Laws* 704b-705c; Aristotle, *Politics* 1265a20-27.

<sup>3</sup> When Socrates establishes a minimal and frugal state in which all the members do their own jobs according to the division of labor, Glaucon calls the city deridingly "city of pigs" which fulfills only basic needs.

land, which was then sufficient for feeding the men who were then, will now be small although it was sufficient... Then must we cut off a piece of our neighbors' land, if we are going to have sufficient for pasture and tillage, and they in turn from ours, if they let themselves go to the unlimited acquisition of money, overstepping the boundary of the necessary?"(373d)

To this question, Glaucon, the young interlocutor of Socrates, answers in the positive. And Socrates concludes by saying : "After then won't we go to war as a consequence?... and let's not yet say whether war works evil or good, but only this much, that we have in its turn found the origin of war—in those things whose presence in cities most of all produces evils both private and the public" (373d-e). As Pangle and Ahrens Dorf correctly point out, the ideal city indispensably involves in war or conquest from the outset, since the leisure is required for the life envisioned in the *Republic*.<sup>4</sup>

The acknowledgement of inevitable expansion of ideal city raises two questions: first, is it legitimate that the ideal city, presumably a just city, opts for aggression even without any wrongs having been committed by that neighbor city or its people?; second, is the ideal city able to sustain after having invaded into the innocent neighbors in the jungle of international anarchy? While declaring the origin of war, Socrates leaves out the first question without promising to deal with the issue in the future. [Thus, we have to wait and see whether Socrates gets back to the issue. For the time being let's put off the judgment whether Plato excludes international justice for good].

The second issue is addressed in the fourth book of the *Republic* (422d-423a). Here Plato has his Socrates reply to the young Adeimantus, who asks about the effective foreign policy of the ideal city. Surprisingly enough, Socrates' suggestion is that the ideal city should contrive shrewd alliance policy, since it lacks resources in comparison with other wealthy states. The basic line of the policy is to estrange the opponents to each other. In particular, Socrates suggests that the ideal city should send an embassy to the other city and tell the truth of the circumstances as follows: "we make use of neither gold nor silver, nor is it lawful for us, while it is for you. So join us making war and keep the others' property." Should this estrangement policy work for the security of the ideal city? In fact, Socrates convinces the young Adeimantus that the counter state which would hear the truth will "not choose to make war against solid lean dogs, that is, the ideal city, than the dogs against fat and tender sheep"(422d).

Even if the estrangement diplomacy is successful, however, there is another kind of concern. What if the ideal city is faced not with multiple enemies but with a potentially hostile, wealthy, and

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<sup>4</sup> Pangle, Thomas L. & Peter J. Ahrens Dorf, *Justice among Nations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), p.49.

hence one big powerful neighbor city? To this concern Socrates seems to apply 'divide and rule' policy. He says: "You are a happy one, of you suppose it is fit to call 'city' another than such as we have been equipping.... The others ought to get bigger names, for each of them is very many cities but not a city... there are two, in any case, warring with each other, one of the poor, the other of the rich. And within each of these there are very many. If you approach them as though they were one, you'll be a complete failure; but if you approach them as though they were many, offering to the ones the money and the powers of the very persons of the others, you'll always have the use of many allies and few enemies."(422e-423a)

Consequently Socrates concludes: "as long as your city is moderately governed in the way it was just arranged, it will be biggest; I do not mean in the sense of good reputation but truly biggest, even if it should be made up of only one thousand defenders. You'll not easily find one city so big as this, either among the Greeks or the barbarians, although many seem to be many times its size"(423a).

In sum, the foreign policies of the ideal city have no moral limitation at least on the surface. It shows no hesitation to invade into innocent neighboring cities. It implements available means whatever for achieving security, which includes a nasty policy of estranging neighbor cities and inciting civil war in the potential opponent city. The foreign policies of the ideal city almost assimilate to those of a Machiavellian state which has no consideration of moral dimension and uses unjust means of foreign policies and ruthless war tactics against enemies in order to achieve a set goal. However, it is noteworthy that the ideal city does not seek after power as much as it can. The initial provocation seems to be inevitable. But this does not mean that any provocation is allowed in the ideal city. Once the ideal city reaches the appropriate size with the appropriate amount of wealth, it is not allowed to expand beyond that point. Rather it is supposed to remain defensive. However, one cannot deny that Plato suggests daring to use immoral means in order to maintain the ideal city.

#### IV

Then, is Plato an immoralist in international relations while being a moralist in domestic politics? In the *Republic* Plato manifestly rejects political realism in domestic politics. Plato endorses justice in every respect: justice is good for its own sake and for its consequences. The unjust people are neither happy nor strong at least within a domestic context. In contrast Plato seems to endorse political realism in international relations that demonstrates that the strong rule the weak and the might makes right. To repeat the question, is it correct to assume that Plato separates his view of justice in domestic politics and that in international relations? Contrary to the separation assumption,

the *Republic* provides a couple of reasons for us to believe that Plato still cares for justice in international realms [although it is not yet clear whether he has a consistent theory of justice that embraces international realms as well as domestic within a single system.]

First, Plato has Socrates offer a certain concept of just war such as *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. As a matter of fact, the essence of the educational program for the guardians is directly related to *jus ad bellum*. The whole point of the education is to identify enemies and friends and to behave toward them separately in proper manners. In other words, the education is focused on keeping the natural inclination of the selected guardians, that is to say, being hostile toward enemies and, at the same time, being friendly toward fellow citizens. The goal of the education is that the guardians come to have moderation and justice to play appropriate roles in the society, while simultaneously being courageous (*andreia*, manliness) and equipped with spiritedness. How is moderation squared with courage? At first glance, the problem seems to be solved with ease by applying courage to enemies and justice to friends. For a modern man the distinction between friends and enemies is no problem since the distinction is officially given by the sovereign state. However, Socrates at some point raises questions whether we really know who are friends and who are enemies. [\*need to add Socrates' points in conversation with Polemarchus] Without perfect knowledge about friends and enemies the courage should not be exerted blatantly. Instead it should accompany moderation of behaving with restraint even toward enemies. The guardians should not be recklessly hostile toward all the foreigners. Instead, the guardians are supposed to have thoughtful knowledge of when to fight and when not to fight, and whom to fight and whom not to fight (375b-c). This knowledge requires more than merely following categorically state's declaration of friends and enemies. Having said this, it is reasonable to conclude that this knowledge has much to do with *jus ad bellum* and that Plato as a designer of the educational program was also concerned with it.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Socrates presents his position in a rather nuanced manner, since the educational program for the guardians is largely focused on "appropriate" theology in the form of poetry. The guardians should be taught to do right things by being told gods' "appropriate" behaviors. Here Socrates attacks Hesiod and Homer (377d-378e). According to Socrates, their poetry is wrong because it contributes to a wrongful theology. In our context the interesting point of Socrates is that the existing poetry is wrong in that the gods are depicted as cruel and brutal, committing acts of violence and murder against each other. The gods are not supposed to take delight in internal fighting and excessive brutality. Plato here warns against holding the stories of cruelty and brutality

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. 375b-c; Alcibiades 107d-e.

in high esteem as laudable examples. Similarly, the guardians should restrain their desires for material gain. They should be fierce only when it is called for in the service of the city. Good guardians should be trained from a young age in appropriate *musike*, what we can call today, the humanities with ethics and sound poetry at center. The teaching of *musike* is aimed at creating a class of the guardians who are fierce and violent only when these qualities are necessary. Within the confines of the luxurious city this would mean fighting fiercely and savagely against anyone from whom territory needs to be occupied. Remember that the ideal city is not a city of "pigs", a city with frugality and even deficiency. It is rather a luxurious city that requires certain amount of wealth.

However, once we turn to the education of the guardians, it is noticeable that the guardians themselves should depart from luxury, although they exist for the sake of the security of the very luxurious city. For the purpose of educating the guardians a strict measure of austerity and health is reintroduced so that they are eventually inclined to have disparaging attitude toward wealth, and needless to say, luxury. In 421a-422a, both wealth and poverty are warned against as dangerous elements for the guardians. The luxurious city is eventually purified through moderation. By this description, it is implied that the ultimate goal of making war consists in something higher than just taking over land from others for the sake of material wealth. In other words the cruelty is necessary within a confine of ideal state. Yet it should not be unbridled for instance by the reckless pursuit of wealth.

In addition, it is noteworthy that the fierceness that is apparently required as a virtue of the guardians is in fact qualified by Socrates' insistence on the love of learning in good natured dogs as well as in guardians (376b). Socrates has assimilated good guardians to good natured dogs, which are hostile to the unknown and friendly to the known. The good guardians and the good natured dogs share the quality of love of the known. However, the love of learning is somewhat modification of the love of the known. As a matter of fact, the love of learning is to become eager to make familiar what was once unknown or strange. Thus, the love of learning is in a certain sense opposed to the alleged virtue of the guardians, which is to show unswerving hostility toward the unknown and to act ferociously toward the strangers. If the guardians are required to have the love of learning, they may extend the horizon of friendship beyond their fellow citizens. Thus, Socrates does not extol an unreflective and completely automated distinction between friends and enemies. Instead he demands that right response should be based on wisdom and the love of learning, presumably indicating that the unknown and unfamiliar can become the known and familiar, just as a dog rightly trained can come to love a new owner.<sup>6</sup> Holding these points together, we come to

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<sup>6</sup> This point was emphasized in a passage in Book 1 of the *Republic* (334b-336a).



the conclusion that thoughtless brutality against one's enemies is certainly not advocated by Plato.

The problem is how to make the guardians retain the virtue of courage as expected for the security of the ideal city and simultaneously have a taste of the love of learning. How is it possible for the guardians to be spirited and if necessary even brutal, and, at the same time, eager for learning? My argument is that it is possible only when the fierceness and the brutality serve a higher, or more encompassing sort of virtue; not merely the love of learning but the love of wisdom, in fact, a marked virtue of the rulers. The guardians' love of learning encourages themselves to appreciate the wisdom of the rulers and thus to respect the philosophers. [This is why the guardians should be under the rule of the philosophers, who have the love of wisdom comprehensively. This is also the reason why the rulers, i.e. philosophers-kings in Platonic ideal city, are selected among the guardians. \*\*This argument needs to be more elaborated]

Plato also appears to be concerned with *jus in bello*, in this case, more explicitly in book 5 of the *Republic*. Socrates here distinguishes the wars against barbarians from the wars among the Greek. He assimilates the latter to civil wars among factions. If there is a faction which "wastes the fields and burns the houses of others," then the faction is a wicked one and its members are not lovers of their city. The victors are allowed to "take away the harvest of the vanquished" (470d). Similarly, "as Greeks, they won't ravage Greek land or tear down houses" and they will "keep up the quarrel until those to blame are compelled to pay the penalty by the blameless ones who are suffering" (471b). From the exchange between Socrates and Glaucon about traditional bearing of civil wars (470c-471c) a list of *jus in bello* is checked out. First, pillaging and ravaging of lands are to be avoided. Second, only those actually responsible for a dispute are to be seen and punished as enemies. Third, there should be no enslavement or killing of the defeated population following war. Fourth, the dispute must be conducted in a way that allows for a just and mutually acceptable peace, so that a state of war does not continue interminably.

## V.

Now, is it fair to say that Plato endorses the idea of just war, at least, among the Greeks? It is hard to decide conclusively. At the moment, however, let me confirm that Plato is by no means an isolation-based idealist nor a straightforward realist even in the international realm. This identification still leaves large room for ambiguity. We need to elaborate more what kind of realism Plato endorses, if he were neither an idealist nor a hardcore realist. To my understanding, Plato provides a key to this issue earlier in Book 1 of the *Republic*, in which Socrates refutes Thrasymachus, a sophist, a representative realist who has systematic theory of political realism with its connection with legal positivism. In his exchange with Socrates Thrasymachus argues that injustice is good, that

unjust people are strong and that injustice brings about happiness (338c-339a). Thrasymachus is aware that people tend to respect justice and try not to commit injustice by means of obeying the laws. His point is like this: people mistakenly believe that they observe the laws because it is just to do so; in fact, however, the strong make them believe that it is just to observe the laws, which actually serve the benefits of the strong themselves. Thrasymachus convinces that the strong rule the city by means of establishing a regime and legislating laws for their own benefits. Thrasymachus is not a vulgar realist, who believes that everyone seeks after power and interest with no calculation. Instead he is a nuanced realist who distinguishes the powerful from the ordinary people and connects political realism with legal positivism: one had better obey the laws unless one becomes powerful enough to be a ruler or rulers of a regime with an ability to legislate laws for the service of the rulers.

Socrates refutes Thrasymachus in all the three aspects. Socrates denies that injustice either good, or strong, nor happy. In our context, it is worthy to examine Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus' second claim: the unjust are strong (351a-352c). To reiterate, Thrasymachus' claim is that injustice in a complete scale is identical with great power because such unjust people prove to be strong enough to do whatever they want with the aid of nuanced legalism.

First, Socrates draws Thrasymachus' attention to the issue that there is a certain connection between injustice and debility. Socrates' scheme is to make an analogy of injustice in groups such as a city, army or any kind of tribe. Socrates asks: "do you believe that either a city, or an army, or pirates, or robbers, or any other tribe which has some common unjust enterprise would be able to accomplish anything, if its members acted unjustly to one another?" (351c). Socrates' attempt to make the analogy of a group and a man concerning injustice is somewhat anticipated. As is shown above, Thrasymachus' argument includes the point that the issue is in proper sense not merely concerned with individual life but more importantly with political dimension of a city. The issue of justice has something to do with regime type. In this context, Socrates is able to show that there is a certain causality between injustice and debility, based on the understanding that injustice within a group makes it incapacitated due to hatred and distrust among its members. Thus, Socrates is able to convince Glaucon that any kind of group should obtain justice, at least, to some extent, in order to remain powerful. Thrasymachus' position that complete injustice proves great power is completely rejected. However, Socrates' argument leaves some grey area. Does he mean that minimal justice within a group is enough for it to wield power toward other groups? Since he gives an example of pirates and robbers when he argues that some justice is necessary in even apparently unjust groups, Socrates implicitly distinguishes internal justice from external justice. It seems that some internal justice, justice among members, is required for any group to do injustice externally. But it is still ambiguous concerning to what extent internal justice is required: is it enough to have

it at minimal amount? Or does the power of a group become proportionally strong according to the amount of internal justice? If that is the case, it amounts to saying that a group with internal justice, that is, with harmony and trust among members, can do injustice only if it goes beyond the limit of the group. Does Plato really mean it?

While leaving large room for ambiguity concerning the relationship between internal and external justice, Socrates returns to individual case. Any individual with complete injustice cannot wield power toward others. Analogously speaking, any individual with its parts conflicting each other cannot wield his or her power contrary to Thrasymachus' expectation of completely unjust people. Internal justice of a man means to have harmony in the parts of the man, whatever they are. Like any kind of a group internal justice is required for a man to do something. Socrates says: "[injustice] make[s] him unable to act, because he is at faction and is not of one mind with himself, and second, an enemy both to himself and to just men" (352a). It is noteworthy that the case of an individual man unlike the case of a group shows more intimate causality between internal and external justice. Lack of internal justice of a man disables him to do anything (I would say that this is an inside-out effect of justice). More importantly, it is also implied that external injustice, that is, unjust acts toward others, may cause internal disharmony. It is indispensable that unjust acts toward others corrupt actors themselves. Thus, in the case of an individual man, justice works in both directions: inside-out and outside-in. How about the case of a group? It seems that justice affects the group in inside-out direction. However, as aforementioned, we are not sure whether justice affects the group in outside-in direction. As a matter of fact, the most interesting question to us is the outside-in effect of justice in the case of a city. The problem is that Socrates is silent about this outside-in effect of justice in the case of a city, while he explicitly approve inside-out effect of justice. However, if we note that there is a parallelism between a city and a man, we may acknowledge that outside-in effect of justice is validated for a city as well as for an individual man. Just as the power of an individual works internally and externally with continuity, the power of a city *may* work in the same way.

If this interpretation is correct, we can have better understanding of why Plato supports apparently just war theory and why he demands that the ideal city should refrain from expanding too much, although he seems to endorse political realism, to begin with. In sum, Plato implies that the ideal city is supposed to be moderate and just in making foreign policies. It is not because moderation and justice are proven "international virtue" that the ideal city should be subordinate to. Rather it is because moderate and just foreign policies are the best way that the ideal city can maintain internal harmony (otherwise the city would suffer from internal disharmony due to the outside-in effect of justice). Thus, moderate and just foreign policies, at least for the ideal city, is also the best way that it exercises influential power in the international realm.

## VI.

Let me summarize what I have done so far. At first glance, Plato looks like a naïve idealist who would falsely believe that ideal city could be isolated from international context. If only possible, the ideal city had better remain isolated. Otherwise Plato appears to be a typical realist who would separate domestic and international realms and apply Machiavellian realism at least to the international arena. Plato allows the ideal city to intrude into neighboring city even without having been wronged by its people. Meanwhile, Plato shows some taste of just war theory. The educational program in the ideal city strongly implies *jus ad bellum* and Socrates alludes *jus in bello* more directly. How can we understand in harmony these different tenors of Plato's international thought? We cannot define it conclusively. However, I argued that close reading of Plato's *Republic* gives some hints on his coherent international political thought that the existing Plato scholarship tend to ignore. I paid special attention to the exchange of Thrasymachus and Socrates in Book 1 of the *Republic*, where, I argued, Plato epitomized his position of international political thought. Here he emphasizes that justice affects human affairs not only as an internal condition which enables an actor to wield his power externally, but also as an external condition which implicitly determines internal state. Moreover, these inward and outward directions in the effect of justice are valid not only for an individual but also for a city. In our context the attractive point here is that Plato implies that external actions of a city affects its internal condition in such an important way that it should maintain foreign policies moderate and just. Of course, the ultimate goal of Platonic political philosophy is to establish the best regime not the greatest regime. Therefore, as for Plato moderate and just foreign policies should be opted for not because there is an absolute concept of justice in international affairs but more because such foreign policies may affect the internal state of the city in a positive way.

Now we can derive from the seemingly conflicting views Plato's coherent international thought, which ends up with endorsing moderate and just foreign policies. Since his first priority is to establish an ideal city, he cannot help fulfill basic conditions for it. He may well consider the scarcity of resources and acknowledge the inevitability of war. However, the seemingly realist position is not based on an excessive expansionism because the ideal city demands appropriate amount of wealth. Thus, its realist bearing should be qualified and committed to justice in order for the city to remain best. The observation of just war regulation is an example of applying moderate and just foreign policies. And regarding middle power as a goal perfectly fits in Plato's endorsement of such foreign policies.

From this perspective of Plato's international thought, the status of middle power carries a new significance. In essence the middle power is situated in a better position to maintain Platonic ideal

city by means of adopting moderate and just foreign policies. Of course, all the middle powers do not necessarily aim at Platonic ideal city. However, if a contemporary middle power state changes viewpoints from simple realism to a more nuanced Platonic realism, and finally if it regards the status of middle power not as discontent but as a practically desirable goal, then such a state of middle power increases its moral reputation both in domestic and international realms and eventually it would have more leverage in international arena.

Will South Korean decision makers in foreign policies buy this suggestion? What would be more concrete benefits when it adopts Platonic endorsement of middle power as a medium for moderation and justice in international relations? How can South Korea or any country in a similar position convince other middle powers that Platonic foreign policies eventually bring about globally desirable goods as well as individual national interest? More specifically how can South Korea establish morally superior status of middle power in East Asia and how could it convince China, Japan, US that Korea's Platonic positioning of middle power promotes mutual benefits and, what is more, contributes to the treatment of global issues such as human rights, climate change, world poverty, global distributive justice, and so forth? Lots of tasks and discussions await. However, I conclude that the first step is made possible when we have fresh appreciation of Platonic version of middle power positioning.