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【Abstract】

Construction of a City in Speech and Purification of the City

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In Book 6, Socrates said, before drawing the outline of the constitution, philosopher-rulers would take as their slate a city and begin by wiping it clean (*katharan poiēsai*). They would refuse ‘to have anything to do with any individual or city, or draft any laws, until they were either given a clean city or had cleaned it for themselves’ (Rep. 501a5-7). The quickest and simplest way to wipe clear or purify the city is, specifically, sending everyone in the city over the age of ten into the country-side to isolate these people’s children from their parents’ values and bringing them up according to philosopher-rulers’ own customs and laws (540e4-541a4). Such drastic purification of the city is a prerequisite for philosophers’ ruling. In other words, even if philosophers somehow spontaneously appear in the city, without the purification of it they cannot help but keep quiet and mind their own business. Because, they are too weak to resist the vicious single-handed and would be killed before they could be any use either to themselves or to anyone else (496d2-5).

Similarly, there seem to be indistinctly these two aspects, before and after purification of the city, in the simile of the cave. On the one hand, ‘as for any philosopher who tried to set prisoners free, and take them to the upper world, if they could somehow get their hands on him and kill him’, they would do just that (517a4-6). This aspect is undoubtedly unchanged from previous situation of the city likened to the cave, before purification of the city. On the other hand, since ‘the philosophers in our hypothetical city have been better and more fully educated than the other spontaneous philosophers’ (520b7-8) and the law has produced such philosophers as guides and rulers to bind the city together (520a3-4), we can assume that a kind of elitist education system must have been already established in the city (cf. 539e3-540a8). This aspect is certainly after some sort of purification happened in the city.

If philosophers returned to the cave or the city before purification, their engagement in political activities would be vain self-sacrifice, not any use either to themselves or to the city. Alternatively, if the city which they returned to was somehow purified, by whom, when, and how could the city be purified at all? In the *Laws* (736a3-4), it is said that ‘every lawgiver must somehow accomplish some sort of purification (*katharmos*) at the beginning’. However, if things are being done in speech but not in deed, we can assume that the purification has happened according to our manner of thinking (736b5-7). Similarly, in our city founded in speech, can we also assume that the purification was accomplished? In this paper, in order to answer the question, I will explore the relationship between the purification mentioned above and long construction of a city in speech in Books 2-4

which is a process to purify (*diakathairein*) ‘the swollen luxurious city’ (372e3,8, 399e4-5).