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Sharing Beyond Capital: A Response to Collective Sharing of Capital 超越资本的共享：关于卢德之理事长《让资本走向共享》的评论

"Solving the problem of inequality has been the most fervent pursuit of humanity."- Dezhi Lu
“解决不平等的问题一直是人类最热切的追求。”-卢德之

The act of sharing itself is one that has been the value-based foundation of every civilization as it moves from survival to prominence. This value has transcended religious doctrine and Confucius philosophy with a consistent message, which is to care for your fellow man. It is often said that a closed fist cannot give nor receive blessings. Dr. Dezhi Lu has recently shared an article, *Collective Sharing of Capital* that addresses the problem in social development and charges the wealthy to engage in modern philanthropic efforts as a means for collective growth. Dr. Lu coins the term *Collective Sharing*, which is combining two concepts: majoritarianism and capital (Lu, 2015, p.5). He effectively and eloquently describes the ever-changing culture of capital and proposes a path towards creating social change through sharing capital. Sharing is a parallel process; it is one that helps others in need, and another act of empowering for a greater humanity. The later is one that I will address in greater detail in this response. In this commentary, my goal is to capture the essence of Dr. Lu's philosophy and emphasize the spirit of mindful giving.

Dr. Lu's approach in utilizing both western and eastern philosophical ideologies points to a more effective perspective on the moral responsibility of the fortunate. He uses this approach as a means to de-vilify the wealthy in order to emphasize that the rich drive the social growth of every modern society. This controversial claim may be taken out of context as being misinterpreted that the wealthy are the heart and blood of every society, which is a mistake. The wealthy are the influential stakeholders that shift societal direction and empower a collective community. This act of empowerment is derived from leadership, vision, and philanthropy; to give capital however is not the end to a social problem. The act of giving must be approached by first, understanding the intentionality of giving, along with having the premise to empower, not enable, second using the awareness to move towards empowerment. It is often misquoted that



money is the root of all evil. This is false. The *love* of money is the root of all evil. It is when men love capital more than humanity. The capital then becomes a living, breathing monster that engulfs the soul and destroys the compassion within. It is not evil to accumulate wealth and live prosperously. The evil lies when men of all social classes fail to place compassion and empathy for others as they work towards prosperity. Here is where society often misconstrues the wealthy authenticity of giving. To be wealthy and to be unethical are not synonymous, this fallacy derives from examples that resonate in the mind of the public of individuals with power and wealth who have forgotten to be compassionate, who have moved away from empowerment and solely focused on sharing comfortably. If we refocus this act of sharing and expand our perspective of philanthropy as a movement towards empowerment, the wealthy will then begin to collectively empower systems in society, thus shifting the need to alleviate suffering momentarily to strengthening communities permanently.

The philosophy of 5th century philosopher Kongzi more popularly known as Confucius, fathered the most influential philosophical and moral perspectives of Chinese culture. *The core of Confucianism, is Humanism. It focuses on the practical, especially the importance of the family, and not a belief in gods or the after-life.* Confucianism, broadly speaking, does not exalt faithfulness to divine will or higher law (Moas, 2015). This stance rests on the belief that human beings are teachable, improvable, and perfectible through personal and communal endeavor -- especially self-cultivation and self-creation. Confucian thought focuses on the cultivation of virtue and maintenance of ethics. Some of the basic Confucian ethical concepts and practices include *Ren, Yi and Li*. Confucianism holds one in contempt, either passively or actively, for the failure of upholding the cardinal moral values of Ren and Yi. Ren is an obligation of altruism and humaneness for other individuals. Yi is the upholding of righteousness and the moral disposition to do good. Li is a system of norms and propriety that determines how a person should properly act in everyday life. The importance of Ren, Yi, and Li are emphasized indirectly throughout Dr. Lu's article of collective sharing. The moral obligation of the wealthy is to not only store their spiritual treasures in heaven, but also be aware of the suffering of others and do good while they are living. Human beings are often honored in death by their contributions to society. It is celebrated in glorious fashion the acts and gifts given. It is the opinion of this writer that by turning the wheel of fate while we are living; honoring our altruistic actions and focus on the Ren, Yi, Li our society's ability to collectively share will be instinctual. Thus, if we are able to tap into our DNA of humaneness and return to the essence of our collective good and remove the "us verses them" mentality a more unified society will arise. Human beings share a common geneology, and most are longing to share, to



sacrifice, and to actively engage in harmonious development (Lu, 2015, p.17). Our innate desire to survive as a civilization also includes our desire to help others for the development of secure societal future. In order for this to occur we cannot solely rely on the act of moving capital from one bank account to the other, it is a matter of being aware of intention and active engagement.

To drive these points further allow me to provide my interpretation of the anecdotal story of Avalokitesvara, which provides us with an object lesson into mindful capital giving. I will utilize this terminology of mindful capital giving and mindful capital sharing interchangeably. It is told that long ago that Avalokitesvara, a student of Buddha Amitabha, developed a sense of compassion and empathy for all beings. He had an experience that moved beyond his egoistic self similar to one we have when we notice a social change that needs to occur or witness a tragic global calamity and he made a sacred vow to alleviate suffering from all and to show compassion to all. If Avalokitesvara broke this vow, he said may his head be cracked into ten pieces and “may my body be split into a thousand pieces.” After his vow, he traveled the world striving to free everyone in his path from suffering. After years of genuine effort, he was mentally fatigued and during his meditation state he began to feel a breaking point. He said to himself, despite the fact he helped many people there were countless others still suffering. He found this infinite mass of suffering unbearable. In anguish he cried out, what is the use? I can do nothing for them. It is better for me to be happy and peaceful myself (Lorne, 2004).

How often do we hear this same statement when it comes to philanthropy? After our passion reaches a wall or when we don't see change happening at the rate we desire, we then give up and begin to distance ourselves from those who are suffering and place focus into our own egoistic desires. At this point in the story, through the force of his previous vow, his head split into ten pieces and his body into a thousand pieces. His teacher Amitabha appears and heals Avalokitesvara transforming him into ten pieces of his former self to give him ten new faces that look into all directions and an eleventh head a replica of Amitabha's own. The thousand pieces of Avalokitesvara's body is transformed into a body with a thousand arms. Each of his thousand hands has an eye in its palm. This replaced his ego in his hand with a sense of new awareness.

The transformation of Avalokitevara provides a very visceral example to how we often feel when giving becomes a burden. Our ego's come into the way of alleviating suffering with awareness. One common example is giving only when a calamity happens, such as an earthquake or natural disaster. By no means am I minimizing the



importance of giving during tragic events such as these, however I would like to focus on the individual's awareness of mindfully sharing. Do we give to alleviate our own guilty discomfort regarding this calamity? Are we giving because of our ego, or due to the fact that this calamity may have affected our country of origin? Hence, we then act? Is it for a tax benefit? Is this simply a means to clear our conscious? Or is it done with intent and awareness? Are we mindfully sharing to move away from feeding our egoistic desires? Avalokitesara's eleven heads allowed him to view suffering from all dimensions. Not only when it hits home or when it affects our egos, it is a view that moves beyond race, class, ethnicity and ego. His thousand arms represents that giving is an act that is constantly occurring not only at opportune moments. These hands to me also represent the diversity in giving. Philanthropy should empower others beyond class, status and socio-economic status. The eye in each hand plays a dual role, which is to look within and to look out. Looking within adheres to the awareness of self from the giver and looking out is to provide the vision of empowering others to also move towards the self-sustaining path of alleviating suffering. Dr. Lu refers to this as The Spirit of Capital, it is not only motivations of those who own capital but all who participate in it. Why do we earn money? Spend money? and I would like to add Share money to his Spirit of Capital ideology. This is the eye in the palm. The awareness of mindfully sharing capital is the essence of intention, which drives direction of society. "At this point, the spirit of capital has two functions. First, it is our motivation for progress...Second, it is a mechanism of balance, as it guides people to pursue social justice, harmony and progress, while at the same time seeking prosperity." (Lu, 2015, p.19) This creates a continuance of empowerment.

It is this collective empowerment that we ideally hope to accomplish through the philosophy of collective sharing. Society's leaders must return to our philosophical teachings and apply the ideologies of mindfulness and move towards this understanding that the division between socioeconomic classes derives from a place of suffering. The poor often feel the rich has lost their compassion and the rich often feel burden stricken by their efforts, and feeling that they must just worry about their own happiness, thus this conflict comes to a breaking point as Avalokitesvara's body broke into a thousand pieces so must our society philosophically speaking. It is then we can rebuild our societal values, views and motives behind philanthropy. Similar to when Amitabha healed Avalokitesvara, the pieces in the society may appear to be broken, however the unification comes as a result of shifting the prism of perspective regarding prosperity. The dissention between the classes creates a psychological barrier towards altruistic collectivism. In order for the collective good move towards collective empowerment, the values of shared meaning through the act of giving must occur.



It is this premise in which, I believe Dr. Dezhi Lu's very timely philosophical call to the wealthy encompasses a movement of collective sharing, which in turn will evolve into collective empowerment. Addressing our own awareness into this process with intentionality behind philanthropy is the path towards understanding how these efforts will empower those in suffering. The soul of a society is one hurts and heals all, not some. It is this Spirit of Capital that Dr. Lu describes has to be not only a moral responsibility of the wealthy. It is a responsibility of all to include self-awareness to evolve into the next level of prominence in society regarding the soul of society. Capital is a tool to a means and those who are in positions to engage in philanthropic empowerment movements are the catalyst towards changing this culture of sharing. This is the Yi Confucious emphasized as being a core value in society. That all members of society should uphold the righteousness and moral responsibility to do good and actively engage in philanthropy. Lastly, I will close with the powerful words of Dr. Dezhi Lu (2015), "modern philanthropy is inherently society's cause, and needs society to understand it, support it, and participate in it."

Dr. Juan Rios obtained his DSW is a recent graduate from Rutgers University Doctorate School of Social Work in 2015 Program. He presently is a part-time lecturer at Rutgers University and research fellow at the Huamin Research Foundation at Rutgers University. Dr. Rios also has a practice in Jersey City, NJ.

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